

UNIT HISTORY

48TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY (UH-1) (A)

5 July 1965 to 26 September 1966

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## 18TH AVIATION HISTORY

### CHAPTER ONE: THE COMPANY IS FORMED

The 48th Aviation Company (Airmobile)(Light), with support detachments, the 390th Transportation Detachment, 279th Signal Detachment, and 286th Medical Detachment, was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia by General Order 200, Hq, Third US Army, on 5 July 1965. The only name listed on the 5 July morning report was that of Major Keith L. Groom, 04003648, the first Commanding Officer. The first enlisted entry on the morning report was Specialist Five Joseph B. Pearsey, which appeared on the 21st of July 1965. The following personnel strengths were authorized the 48th Aviation Company and to attached detachments:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>TO&amp;E</u>
48th Avn Co (AML)	14 Off, 41 WO, 115 EM	1-77E w/c 1
390th TC Det (CHFM)	1 Off, 1 WO, 70 EM	55-500R w/c
286th Med Det	1 Off, 8 EM	8-500C w/c 9
279th Sig Det	1 Off, 9 EM	11-500D w/c 6

All personnel and equipment were to be obtained from locally available resources. The primary source of personnel and equipment was the result of the 11th Air Assault Div (Test) and 2nd Infantry Div being reformed into the First Air Cavalry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. The cadre officers were assigned from the 10th Avn Group and the EM came from various units declaring personnel excess as a result of their reorganization. The 48th Avn Co cadre coordinated through the S-4 officer of 10th Avn Group, Fort Benning, and received approximately 75% of their equipment through lateral transfer from the reorganizing units at Fort Benning. The remaining equipment and supplies were requisitioned through normal supply channels on a priority basis.

The pilots for the 48th Avn Co signed in at Hq, 10th Avn Group on 1 Sep 65. Nearly all the aviators reporting for duty with the 48th Avn Co were reassigned from European assignments and their tours had been curtailed as a result of the Vietnam build up.

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 1 Sep 65. From the personnel data cards completed by each officer inprocessing, Major Drummond established his chain of command. His key personnel were:

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr	CO
SFC E7 George C. Laws	1/Sgt
Major Robert D. Stearns	AO
Major Thomas L. Williamson	Opns Off
Major Willis E. Smith	1st Airlift Plt Ldr
Major Harry J. Zellmer	2nd Airlift Plt Ldr
Major Velma E. Parker	3rd Plt Ldr(Gun Plt)
Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr	Intel Off

Key personnel for attached detachments were:

Major Edward R. Brophy Jr	CO, 390th TC Det
Captain Orton B. Donaldson III	CO, 279th Sig Det
Captain Arthur R. Hagen	CO, 286th Med Det

During the month of September 1965, the company worked a seven day week and directed their efforts toward POC qualifying all personnel and to drawing, processing and packing TO&E and TL50 equipment for overseas shipment. Training days were alternated with work days. The training schedule included 10 hours refresher training per pilot, weapons qualification, survival, escape and evasion, code of conduct, Geneva Convention, first aid, pilot briefings on tactics and techniques and a general Vietnam orientation. The pilots trained in aircraft belonging to the 181st Avn Tng Co, Fort Benning, Georgia.

On 17 September 1965 Capt Rex Saindon, 1LT Robert Smith, CWO Thomas Paulson, CWO Kenneth Hill, CWO Gary Wilkinson, and WO Glenn Fisher ferried five 48th Avn Co UH-1 helicopters to Eagle Mountain Army Depot, Fort Worth, Texas where they picked up five additional helicopters and continued to Stackton Army General Depot, California where the aircraft were processed for overseas shipment.

On 30 September the company conducted payday activities and all personnel desiring leave were granted leave until 18 October 1965. Personnel not desiring leave remained at Fort Benning and continued packing equipment.

Prior to movement overseas the 48th Avn Co and its detachments received inspections from the Inspector General, 3rd U.S. Army.

The 48th Avn Co and detachments were directed overseas by letter, United States Army Infantry Command, dated 8 September 1965, subject: Permanent Change of Station of STRAF Forces.

#### CHAPTER TWO: ADVANCED PARTY DEPART TO ACCOMPANY AIRCRAFT OVERSEAS

On 14 October 1965 Major Edward K. Brophy Jr, Captain Rex Mitchell, Captain Arthur Moen, Captain Arthur Hagen, CWO James V. McCartt, CWO Wayne F. Geer, and 20 enlisted personnel were called off leave to form the advance party to accompany the aircraft overseas. This advanced party boarded a bus for Atlanta, Georgia on 18 October. From Atlanta they flew commercial air to San Francisco International Airport. They reported to Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California where they signed for 16 UH-1B and 9 UH-1B helicopters. The helicopters had already been processed for overseas shipment and had their main rotor blades, stabilizer bars, and tail rotor removed. The gun kits were boxed and secured inside the aircraft. The aircraft were zipped and locked inside large sealable protective bags and loaded aboard the USNS KULA GULF, a baby aircraft carrier.

The advanced party for aircraft sailed from Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California on 25 October 1965 aboard the USNS KULA GULF. The ship made one stop in the Philippine Islands prior to arriving at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN on 13 Nov 65. Five days out from Vietnam the advanced party started deprocessing and reassembling their helicopters.

Major Brophy, on the 13th of November flew one of the reassembled helicopters from the KULA GULF to Long Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn in order to determine the new assignment and duty station for the 48th. Major Brophy was advised to proceed to Vung Tau, that the 48th was assigned to the 145th Avn Bn with duty station Vung Tau.

After being tied up in Cam Ranh Bay harbor for three days, the USNS KULA GULF again set sail with the 48th Avn Co advanced party and helicopters aboard, this time with its destination as Vung Tau, RVN. They were met at Vung Tau on 16 Nov 65 by Major Smith, CO, 611th Transportation Company. Major Smith assigned Major Brophy and the other pilots the call sign "BLUE STALK" to signal the arrival to

the wing and tower operator of the 48th Avn Co aircraft. The aircraft were flown off the USS Horn by 48th Avn pilots and parked in the "Blue Star" parking area. The remaining equipment on board the carrier was off loaded in seven C-57 sea hel loads. (The name "Blue Star" has remained with the 48th Avn Co since 16 Nov 65, however, the call sign was changed twice officially, though not in fact, and the Company Commander in both cases was able to get the Blue Star title back). The advanced party commenced de-preservation and safety of flight inspections on the aircraft and assembled and attached the gun systems to the aircraft. In the meantime, Major Brophy had made contact with the 145th Avn Bn and he was advised that the 48th Avn Co had been transferred to the 10th Avn Bn and would relocate immediately to the Phan Rang Valley approximately 100 miles north of Vung Tau.

On 23 November 1965 Captain Rosengrant of the rear/advanced party had caught a flight aboard an Army Caribou from Nha Trang to Saigon attempting to link up with the advanced party for aircraft and to coordinate the meeting of the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th of November. Captain Rosengrant made contact with Captain Mitchell at 12th Avn Group Hqs, Saigon. He later met with Major Brophy and they arranged to have three aircraft meet the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th.

The advanced party for aircraft remained at Vung Tau for approximately two weeks readying the unit aircraft. As sufficient space and security were provided at Phan Rang, the aircraft were snuttled, at the rate of three per day, until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang.

#### CHAPTER THREE: MAIN BODY DEPARTS FORT BENNING

The 48th Avn Co minus the advanced party with the aircraft (see chap 2) and the rear/advanced party (see chap 4) departed Tuscogee County Airport, Columbus, at hourly intervals between 2330 hours 4 Nov 65 and 0330 hours 5 Nov 65 by commercial Super Constellation aircraft for Oakland International Airport. The move was classified to avoid public suspicion. Commercial buses were on hand to meet each aircraft as it landed at Oakland International and carried the 48th Avn Co personnel with baggage to Oakland Army Terminal where they promptly boarded the USNS Geiger, a Navy Troop Carrier. The USNS Geiger sailed from Pier 7, Oakland Army Terminal at 1730 hours, 5 Nov 65 with the 48th Avn Co (minus) aboard. Throughout the trip, company officers were involved in writing company standard operating procedures to prepare them for operations in Vietnam. The USNS Geiger made one stop-off enroute to RVN at Gual Island and liberty was enforced all personnel from 0900 hours until 1300 hours on 18 Nov 65. The only facility open at the Navy base was a snack bar until the officers of the 48th Avn Co passed the hat and bribed the Naval Officers club bar tender to open the bar at 1030 hours. The enlisted personnel arranged through the Naval Petty Officer's club to have beer and snacks taken to the beach, and the beach party that ensued few will forget.

The next stop was Qui Nhon, RVN where the USNS Geiger tied up for three days, 23-26 Nov, while other units disembarked. All 48th Avn Co personnel remained aboard the USNS Geiger in Qui Nhon harbor. The company spent their first national holiday overseas, enjoying a delicious Thanksgiving Day dinner aboard the ship. Their menu included turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, candied yams, cranberries, peas & carrots, relishes, mince and pumpkin pie and ice cream served with coffee, milk or tea.

The USNS Geiger departed Qui Nhon harbor at approximately 0400 hours, 25 Nov 65 and anchored in Cam Ranh Bay at approximately 0730 hours, 26 Nov 65. Captain Thurlond, OIC of the rear/advanced party met the company aboard the USNS Geiger. Captain Thurlond briefed the Commanding Officer, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr on the unit assignment with 10th Avn Bn and duty station at Phan Rang.

The company, shortly after arrival at Cam Ranh Bay, disembarked into LCUs (Landing Craft Utility), which transported them to the beach. All personnel were issued their basic load of ammunition in the rain. Fifteen of the officers boarded three company helicopters which Major Brophy had brought from Vung Tau (see chapter 2) and flew directly to Phan Rang. The remainder of the company boarded 2 1/2 ton trucks from the 10th Transportation Battalion, Cam Ranh. The trucks were ferried across Cam Ranh Bay and formed a convoy for the trip over National Highway #1 to Phan Rang. An O1-A Bird Dog flew convoy escort and two UH-1B gunships were on standby at Cam Ranh Bay for purposes of security. The company closed station at Phan Rang at 1900 hours, 26 November 1965.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE REAR PARTY CLOSED OUT FORT BENNING AND BECAME THE COMPANY ADVANCED PARTY

The rear party, composed of Captain James F. Thurlond (OIC), Captain Larue R. Rosengrant, 1LT William T. Kegan, SSG Gilbert McCollough, SSG Delbert L. Hall, SP5 Jimmie H. Ray, and PFC Donald D. Wallace remained at Fort Benning to close out property accounts and to turn over their building to another unit. The rear party were the last 48th Avn Co personnel to depart CONUS, the only members to fly directly to RVN, and the first to arrive in Vietnam. The rear party departed Fort Benning by bus and boarded a Commercial Airlines at Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, Georgia, at 0800 hours on 10 Nov 65. They flew by Commercial Air to San Francisco International Airport. A bus met them at the airport and took them directly to Travis AFB, California, where they were booked on a Pan American Jet for Saigon, RVN, with stops at Anchorage, Alaska, Tokyo, Japan, and Clark AFB, Philippine Islands. They arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, RVN at 1300 hours, 13 Nov 65 and were now acting as the advanced party for the main body of the 48th Avn Co.

Shortly after arrival, Captain Thurlond contacted Colonel Jones, CO, 12th Avn Gp in Saigon to report their arrival. 12th Avn Group had no knowledge as to when the 48th Avn Co was scheduled in-country, who they would be assigned to or where their duty station would be. The advanced party moved into Camp Alpha, 90th Repl Bn, Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon, and awaited notification of their assignment. On 16 Nov 65, the party received word that the 48th Avn Co would be assigned to the 10th Avn Bn at Dong Ba Thin and they hopped a ride aboard an Air Force C-130 to Cam Ranh Air Force Base. Their personal and company equipment, to include classified documents, were off loaded on the runway and the C-130 departed. Captain Thurlond contacted 10th Avn Bn who dispatched a helicopter to Cam Ranh. Captain Thurlond and Lt Kegan flew to Dong Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn. Captain Rosengrant and the advanced party (minus) remained overnight at Cam Ranh and joined the others on 18 Nov in Dong Ba Thin. Coordination was completed with Lt Col Olney, who informed them that the 48th Avn Co advance party with the aircraft had been in Cam Ranh but had departed for Vung Tau (see chap 2). Lt Col Olney, Captain Thurlond and Lt Kegan, on 17 Nov 65, flew a helicopter to Phan Rang to reconnoiter a location for the 48th Avn Co. Coordination was made with Colonel B M Mattlick, the Air Force Commander, and Colonel Timothy, CG, 1st Ssg, 101st Abn Div, and the area they agreed upon was an area approximately five acres in size and located East of the Buu Son airstrip. On the 20th the advanced

party conveyed from Dong Ba Thin to Phan Rang in a 2 1/2 ton and 3/4 ton truck they borrowed from the 10th Avn Bn. Passing through the village of Phan Rang they continued straight at Thap Cham where they should have turned right. After realizing their mistake and in the process of turning around, the 2 1/2 ton truck received fire from a sniper. This was the first incident where the 48th Aviation Company received hostile fire. No injuries were sustained and the group continued to the military compound at Phan Rang.

The advanced party encamped with the Air Force, who at that time amounted to an advanced party in Phan Rang with only a few tents erected. The advanced party leased off and staked out the company area. They arranged from the Air Force to have cots, tents and water for the company on their arrival. They coordinated with the 101st Avn Div (also new in Phan Rang) and a field kitchen, complete with fire unit, pots, and pans, was obtained. Actions were also drawn from the 101st. On 23 Nov 65 Captain Rosengrant arranged a flight from Nha Trang to Saigon to link up with Major Brophy and the advanced party accompanying the aircraft, and to arrange for three company aircraft to meet the main body in C Ranch on the 26th. Captain Thurmond met the company aboard the USNS Geiger in Cal Ranh Bay and briefed the company commander on the new location. Company officers were making bets on whether or not Captain Thurmond would make it up the side of the ship via its rope ladder. It was a struggle but Captain Thurmond made it.

#### CHAPTER FIVE: 48TH AVN CO (AML) ARRIVES AT PHAN RANG

The 48th Avn Co, upon arrival at Phan Rang on 26 Nov 65, moved into Air Force tents arranged for them by the advanced party. The first three days in Phan Rang, the officers, NCO's, and EM all were issued axes, machettes, and other tools and everyone pitched in to attempt to clear the trees and underbrush from the area which was to be their new home. On 30 Nov 65 the 48th Avn Co moved out of the Air Force tents and into their partially cleared area. Company personnel continued to clear the company area and as sufficient space was cleared, aircraft were ferried from Vung Tau at the rate of three per day until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang. The first casualty for the 48th in Vietnam was Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr when he received a light injury from a machette during the clearing operations. Lt Jack Horne, while working at clearing operations, encountered one of the many poisonous snakes in the area. The company soon employed approximately 200 coolies to get the clearing operation under way. Throughout the first few weeks while the 48th was clearing the land and building their camp the monsoon rains were in full force and they worked, ate, and slept in mud up to their knees. Before getting settled at their new home, the Phan Rang MACV Sector Advisor warned them that a Viet Cong attack was imminent. On 2 Dec 65 the pilots evacuated the aircraft to Dong Ba Thin where they stayed with the 117th and 129th Airmobile companies for two nights. Throughout the remainder of December it became a nightly procedure to evacuate the aircraft to the 101st Airborne Division contingency area and the crews billeted with units of the 101st. The early part of December was spent clearing the company area, digging foxholes, erecting tents and some limited flying missions.

On 21 Dec 65 the 48th conducted its first company sized airmobile operation when it administratively lifted A/2/502nd Avn Inf from Phan Rang to the shore of the South China Sea some 15 miles East, and returned to Phan Rang with C/2/502nd Avn Inf. Ten UH-1D's and four UH-1B's (gunships) took part in the exercise.

On 22 December, Major Ralph W. Broman became Operations Officer.

On 23 December, Major Broman and CWO Geer experienced the first engine failure in Vietnam. They put the ship down in a rice paddy without a scratch and were quickly rescued.

On 27 Dec 65, twenty-three door gunners were assigned to the 48th Avn Co by the 10th Avn Bn. CWO Temple and WO Fisher departed for Tuy Hoa with a C&C ship to support the 117th Airmobile Company.

On 29 December, the 48th Avn Co completed its first operational combat mission, with the extraction of bodies from a crashed F-7 aircraft. The aircraft had been lost in the mountains approximately 16 miles South of Phan Rang. Earlier attempts by another Airmobile Company to rescue the bodies had been driven off by enemy fire. The 2/327th Abn Inf Bn conducted a combat assault in the vicinity of the crash site to secure the area, however, numerous enemy remained. Captain Arthur Moen and 1LT Robert E. Smith had been flying C&C for the 2/327th and volunteered to attempt the extraction. They successfully accomplished this difficult mission under extremely hazardous conditions. Both 48th Avn Co pilots received the Air Medal with "V" device and were the first members of the 48th Avn Co to be decorated for heroism.

Also on 29 Dec, Captain Carl R. Jones, Captain Morris R. Steenson, Captain Donald R. Kelsey, and CWO Dominik L. Guccione departed for Tuy Hoa with two gunships to augment and train with the 117th Avn Co through 6 Jan 66. The first time 48th aircraft received enemy fire was when these crews and 117th pilots were conducting a live fire exercise in a designated free fire area west of Tuy Hoa and while undergoing target practice an enemy sniper within close vicinity of the target fired back at them. There was no damage to either aircraft or crews.

#### CHAPTER SIX: COMPANY IS DECLARED OPERATIONAL - 1 JAN 66

On 1 Jan 66 the 48th Aviation Company (AHL) was declared combat operational by the CO, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr. The company was in-country a total of only 36 days before it was declared combat operational.

At 0045 hours, 1 Jan 66, the 48th Avn Co crews at Tuy Hoa underwent a mortar attack. The Viet Cong landed 21 mortar rounds within the camp. Fortunately no personnel were injured.

The 48th Avn Co received its first aircraft hit from hostile fire on 2 Jan 66. Aircraft #084, flown by Captain Carl Jones received a hit from small arms fire just below the horizontal stabilizer while escorting a medevac helicopter. This occasion, incidently, happened on Captain Jones' birthday.

After rehearsing for three days, the 48th Avn Co pilots put out the 101st Abn Div LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) in an area 10 miles SE of Phan Rang. The insertion was timed for approximately 15 minutes remaining light. The helicopters orbited 15 minutes after insertion and started back toward home base when the LRRP made an emergency call to the 48th pilots requesting extraction as they were heavily engaged in a fire fight. The 48th Avn Co gunships, led by Major LaVere W. Bindrup, suppressed the enemy fire and the slicks (UH-1D's) extracted the team. This was the first time 48th Avn Co personnel actively engaged the enemy.

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) gunships attacked a Viet Cong platoon sighted in the open by the 101st LRRP. After the gunship attack, 48th Avn Co aircraft lifted a



platoon of 101st Abn Inf troops to the battle site. The LRP reported having observed two ox cart loads of bodies being removed after the gunship attack. The official estimate was 12 VC KIA (Killed by Aircraft).

4-7 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) The company received its T&E equipment. Repair parts had been in-country but had not been delivered to Phan Rang prior to this date.

8 Jan 66: Captains Kelsey and Steenson (097), Captain Clemens and CWO Markle (085), 1LT Green and CWO Morris (093) were called to Saigon to reinforce the 155th Avn Co with gunships on Operation Grimp. The operation required 10 Airmobile companies with over 300 aircraft and two complete Infantry Brigades (1st Div and 25th Div) were heli-lifted. A large battle took place on 9 Jan 66. The first LZ in which the 48th Avn Co gun pilots provided pre-strike fires and armed escort had 4 of 7 gunships severely damaged by hostile fire. The three 48th aircraft were the three not receiving hits. Twelve .50 cal machine guns were captured by the ground troops in this LZ. The 48th gunships escorted troop carrying UH-1D's a total of three additional LZ's and aircraft were severely damaged from host fire in each, but miraculously the 48th again sustained no hits. The crews returned to Phan Rang on the 10th with their first real test of combat flying. The same crews departed the following day again for Tuy Hoa and again to support the 117th Avn Co during Operation Jefferson in conjunction with the ROK (Republic of Korea) Brigade.

9 Jan 66: SO 5, para 19, HQ, 10th Avn Bn, nineteen security personnel were assigned to the 48th Avn Co. Within a week the security personnel totalled 31 and were formed into a security platoon. Their mission was to provide physical security for the 48th Avn Co.

12 Jan 66: At 1300 hours the 48th Avn Co departed Phan Rang for Tuy Hoa with 6 UH-1D's and 3 UH-1B's to reinforce the 129th Avn Co on Operation Jefferson. This became the first sustained support of a combat operation by the 48th Avn Co and this date set off a long and still continuing chain of combat support operations. On 12 Jan the 1st Airlift Platoon departed Phan Rang for Song Hau to support the 2/327th Abn Inf Bn on a combat operation. The first platoon rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa South Airfield. The Service Platoon was split between Tuy Hoa and Phan Rang and the 390th Det (-) remained at Phan Rang as did the administrative sections of the company. During this operation aircraft were returned to Phan Rang for PE's and Major Maintenance. The crews accompanied their aircraft to Phan Rang for PE and were allowed to rest during the time the aircraft underwent maintenance.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN: OPERATION VAN BUREN/HARRISON: TUY HOA

The 48th Avn Co was in general support of both Operation Van Buren (18 Jan-20 Feb 66) and Operation Harrison (21 Feb - 15 Mar 66) with priority of missions going to the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Missions were received by the 10th Avn Bn at the CSUC (Combat Support Coordination Center) and relayed to the companies. The company was briefed that elements of the 95th PAVN (Peoples Army of Vietnam) Regiment, the 3rd Viet Cong Regiment and local Viet Cong companies were known to be operating north and west of Tuy Hoa. The major friendly units in the area were the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, a Republic of Korea Brigade, and the 47th ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Regiment. The 48th Avn Co supported all three friendly elements from 18 Jan - 15 Mar 66.



The 48th Avn Co jelled as a fighting team at Tuy Hoa. They fast earned the reputation for rendering timely and professional aviation support to ground troops ranging from simple one snip supply missions to leading multi-company night combat assaults into insecure landing zones.

The 48th Avn Co, remaining in the field on direct combat support operations from 10 Jan - 15 Mar 66, established a new record for the number of days of sustained combat support from a field location by an airmobile company. Statistically the 48th, on their first combat support operations, achieved an impressive record. During this period, the 48th Avn Co led the largest night helicopter assault on record. Thirty six (36) UH-1D's from three companies escorted by twelve (12) gunships. The mission was to lift two battalions of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div commencing at 0100 hours to exploit the effects of B-52 bombing raid. This assault was accomplished by infiltrating a pathfinder team which lighted the landing zone.

On 2 February the 48th Avn Co set another record by lifting the largest number of troops (2400) and cargo (100 tons) into the largest assortment of landing zones (15) in the history of the Vietnam war. This was accomplished with eighteen (18) UH-1D's (six from the 117th Avn Co). The average pilot on that day flew over nine hours.

(10 Jan - 15 Mar 66)

Total hours flown	1,879:30
Total Sorties flown	19,524
Total cargo lifted	857 tons
Total passengers carried	15,524
Number of aircraft hit by enemy fire	11
Number of aircraft shot down by enemy fire	2
Number of aircraft destroyed by enemy fire	1
Number of Viet Cong KBA	29 confirmed 8 estimated

Quantity of ammo expended

7.62mm	340,300 rounds
40mm	1,068 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	4,977 rockets
JP-4 fuel consumed	250,619 gallons
Number of crew members wounded	8

The 48th Avn Co returned to Phan Rang from Tuy Hoa and remained at home station from 15 Mar - 11 Apr 66. During this period the company maintained five aircraft with crews in Nha Trang in support of HQ, Field Forces I.. At home station emphasis was placed on performing maintenance of aircraft vehicles and in improving the living conditions at Phan Rang. During this period the officers constructed an officers club. The club is of frame structure with a concrete floor and corrugated steel roofing. Employees of R&K Construction company rendered invaluable services and material in building the club. Captain John Jenks was the first appointed club officer and he supervised the construction effort and conducted the necessary correspondence to establish a legal officers open Mess.

The command of the 48th Avn Co was temporarily assumed by Major Willis E. Smith from 17-31 March 1966. Major Charles H. Drummond Jr re-assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 31 March 1966. Major Harry McK Roper Jr assumed command of the company from Major Drummond on 4 April 1966.

On the 2nd and 3rd of April 1966 the 48th Avn Co provided seven UH-1D

helicopters and two OH-1B armed helicopters in support of the 161st Airborne Co who were supporting the 1st Cav Regt (RUC) in operations against two known Viet Cong battalions operating within a twenty kilometer square northwest of Qui Nhon, RVN. This short operation proved to be one of the hottest engagements the 48th Avn Co had participated in up to that time. Four OH-1D and one OH-1B helicopters received direct hits. One aircraft returned with over forty entry holes in the airframe caused from a mortar round exploding close to the aircraft. Statistically these nine aircraft completed a big job for a two day period.

Total sorties flown	315
Total troops carried	206
Total cargo lifted	51.9 tons
Total troops medically evacuated	9 U.S.
Total enemy KBA	6
Total hours flight time	34:00
Total ammo expended	
7.62mm	3200 rounds
40mm	300 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	8 rockets

#### CHAPTER EIGHT: THE UNIT CREST AND MOTTO

Shortly after assuming command, Major Roper designed a company crest. The background for the crest is a "Blue Star" bordered in gold, derived from the original and still-in-effect unit call sign, centered inside the blue Star are the numerals "48" in white letters with black trim. Lettered in red on a white scroll below the Blue Star is the unit motto "SKILL NOT LUCK" also contrived by Major Roper. Upon arrival in country and prior to assuming command of the 48th, Major Roper was repeatedly told of the many successful operations by the newly formed 48th Avn Co, of which most sources contributed their success to pure luck. After but a brief period with the company, Major Roper realized that it was skill, not luck, which accounted for the 48th Avn Co's success and hence the company motto originated. The Blue Star has become a symbol of strong pride among the members of the 48th Avn Co. Each aircraft adorns a Blue Star trimmed in gold on its tail section, and the men in the company proudly wear the Blue Star patch on their right breast pocket. The gun platoon, known by their call sign as the "Jokers" have altered the basic 48th Avn Co crest by placing in green letters the word "Joker" on the white background above the scroll. The members of the 286th Medical Detachment have altered their crest slightly by having embroidered on the white background a red cross with the numerals 286 in black just above the red cross.

#### CHAPTER NINE: OPERATION AUSTIN II

After the short breather in Phan Rang the 48th Avn Co again took to the field, this time they moved South to Phan Thiet, RVN, and again were in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1st Bn, 327th Abn Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. There were reported widespread Viet Cong terrorist activities west and north of Phan Thiet. Operation Austin II was conducted in two phases. Phase I (11-19 Apr 66) was conducted to the west of Phan Thiet. The activity of Phase I, with the exception of two large combat assaults, was primarily in support of small units conducting search and destroy missions. Assaults with from two to five aircraft were made into dispersed confined landing zones. Phase II (20-25 Apr 66) kicked off with the 48th Avn Co making a night combat assault carrying 425 troops of the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn into three LZ's approximately 40

miles north of Phan Thiet. This operation went on record as the largest night combat assault conducted by an airmobile company in the history of the Vietnam War.

For the remainder of Phase II of Austin II the 48th Avn Co staged its aircraft from a forward base of operations. (SF Camp Luong Son) and during daylight hours remained on immediate standby. As the Infantry troops developed the enemy situation the 48th provided troop lift, re-supply, and armed helicopter support. Statistical results of the 48th Avn Co support of Austin II are as follows:

Total hours flown	767
Total sorties flown	2794
Total cargo lifted	78 tons
Total passengers carried	3946
Total aircraft hit by enemy fire	4
Structures damaged	47
Structures destroyed	66
Total VC KIA (confirmed)	13
Crew members wounded	1
Emergency medical evac	6
Total ammo expended	
7.62mm	183,000 rounds
40mm	3,300 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	487 rockets
JP-4 fuel consumed	57,790 gallons

On 24 April 1966, while in general support of Operation Austin II, the 48th Avn Co received a mission of direct support to the 2nd Bn, 44th Inf Regt (ARVN) for a combat assault into an LZ approximately 20 miles south of Phan Thiet. The gunships made a pre-strike of the LZ but drew no fire. Inbound to the LZ aircraft 776, piloted by CWO's William Moore and Tom Paulson, experienced an engine failure. The two pilots expertly autorotated their aircraft without damage to the aircraft or injury to the Vietnamese troops aboard. Following the troop lift a gunship escorting a UH-1D on a resupply mission received four hits. No injuries were sustained by crew members.

Total sorties flown	114
Total troops carried	122
Total cargo lifted	1 ton
Total hours flown	44:30
Total ammo expended	
7.62mm	12,260 rounds
40mm	250 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	56 rockets

#### CHAPTER TEN: OPERATION AUSTIN VI (29 Apr - 18 May 66)

The company, completing Operation Austin II, broke camp and loaded their equipment aboard US Air Force C-130 transports at the Phan Thiet airfield and were flown to an airstrip at Nhon Co near the Cambodian border. The air crews loaded their aircraft with personal equipment and were able to RON at Phan Rang enroute to Nhon Co.

The 48th Aviation Company was placed in direct support of the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with the additional mission of general support to the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div and the 45th Inf Regt (ARVN). An enemy force of unknown size was operating along the Cambodian border utilizing trails to infiltrate personnel and equipment from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The weather until 1000 hours was generally overcast with ceilings from 100 to 200 feet and 1 mile visibility, lifting to from 500 to 1000 feet until 1500 hours and 1800 hours daily. The terrain over which the company operated varied from 1300 MSL to 2300 MSL. The preponderance of the area was covered by heavy jungle vegetation varying in height from 100 to 150 feet. The company established its camp within the perimeter of a newly formed Special Forces Camp. Living conditions were severely crowded due to the lack of space. Newly recruited Viet Cong (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies with their families manned the perimeter surrounding the 48th Avn Co.

The 48th Aviation pilots experienced increased difficulty in low level navigation over the dense jungle. It was also discovered that the dense jungle canopies reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire. In bad weather and at night flares proved especially valuable in helping the pilots find Nhon Co airfield.

The first troop lift for the 1/327th Infantry Battalion occurred on 1 May 66. The Bn was lifted into LZ Savannah (YU628465) and the 48th Avn Co provided ammunition, re-supply and troop lift capability from the Nhon Co airfield through 9 May 66. During the period 9-16 May 66, the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn operated their base of operations from Bu Gia Map airfield which is WSW of Nhon Co approximately 20 miles. Five UH-1D's and 2 UH-1B's were maintained on strip alert during the day at Bu Gia Map airfield for resupply and liner troop moves.

#### Statistical Data

Combat sorties flown	2386
Troops moved	3587 U.S. 600 Non-U.S.
Ammunition expenditures	
7.62mm	45,700 rounds
40mm	600 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	232 rockets
Total flight time	854.5 hours

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN: STOP OFF AT CHEO REO

Again the 48th Avn Co (ALL) packed their gear, struck their tents and loaded their equipment on USAF C-130 pallets for air transport. On 29 May 66 the air crews with their Hueys packed down with personal equipment and tents departed Nhon for Phan Rang. The crews were afforded the opportunity of staying 4 days and 3 nights at "home". The remainder of the company stayed at Nhon Co until all unit equipment was loaded aboard C-130 aircraft and they then proceeded directly to Cheo Reo, the next base of operations.

The air crews took full advantage of being back in Phan Rang, which by this time was becoming more of a fable than a reality to most Blue Stars. The new officers club, which you recall was constructed by unit personnel as were all other structures claimed by the 48th, was the sight of two rather gay parties. It was the first opportunity for the officers to relax and enjoy their own club.

The company closed Cheo Reo on 24 May and started again the now routine procedure of erecting tents, sand bagging their tents, digging foxholes, setting up latrines and a shower point, erecting mess tents and a kitchen and establishing operations.

The 48th Avn Co was again in support of the 1st Bde, 101st Avn Div. Both units were at Cheo Reo to participate in Operation Trooper which never took place. The 48th's tenure at Cheo Reo was abruptly curtailed by orders to again break camp and move. Due to tactical considerations by higher headquarters the 101st and 10th Avn Bn, parent unit of the 48th Avn Co, were to proceed without delay to Dak To. The 48th was encamped at Cheo Reo only six days (24 - 30 May) and no significant operations were conducted.

CHAPTER TWELVE: DAK TO; REINFORCEMENT OF TOURMORONG; OPERATION HAWTHORNE (1-20 Jun 66); OPERATION BEAUREGARD (24 Jun - 14 Jul 66)

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1)(A) (the new designation for former automobile companies proposed by Brigadier General Seneff, Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade and hence officially adopted) closed at Dak To on 30 May 1966. Dak To located approximately 50 miles north of Kontum City in the Vietnamese Central Highlands. The 48th established their camp at Dak To #1 airstrip which is an abandoned airstrip approximately 5 Km East of the active Dak To airfield, also the site of an American Special Forces Camp. Dak To #1 was reverently referred to as "Old Dak To". Old Dak To had a field elevation of approximately 2100 feet MSL and was situated in the expansive Dak To Valley. The surrounding countryside was mountainous with peaks varying from 3000 to 6000 feet MSL. Numerous streams flowed in the valleys providing many areas suitable for landing sights. The mountainous terrain was covered with heavy forest and dense jungle and offered very few landing zones. The weather was generally mild with the evenings quite cool. Early mornings it was common to be weathered in due to fog which generally rose to a ceiling of 1000 feet by 0900 hours. During midday there normally existed a scattered cloud layer from 4000 to 6000 feet MSL. There were occasional thunder showers in mid-afternoon, but the soil had good drainage and there was no real problem with mud.

The company was forewarned that they could expect to remain from five to six months at Dak To. This was all it required for the company to pull together and create a very livable camp. Throughout the area there existed numerous Montagnard tribes and several of these indigenous personnel were employed as KP's and workers. Several impressive hootches were constructed. One constructed by Captain Vincent Ripoll and First Lieutenant Magan resembled more a Swiss Chalet than an Army hex tent. The Majors, with two tents joined, had a porch with overhead canopy (parachute) and several large banana trees adorning their front yard. The supporting artillery units found the 48th Blue Stars a continuous pest as they begged, borrowed and stole 105mm ammo boxes. With the boxes they built wood floors for the mess tents and operations tent and within two weeks nearly all individual tents included wooden floors.

Since Dak To was nearly a three hour flight back to Phan Rang it was no longer practical to perform PE's and major maintenance from home base. For this reason the 390th Trans Det and the rear echelon of the company maintenance section packed up and joined the ubiquitous Blue Stars. The 390th set up operations at Kontum, just North of the local MACV compound. Aircraft were either evacuated or flown to Kontum when major maintenance was required.

Operationally the company was tasked with missions immediately. The company which had now been together for nine months and had matured as a fighting unit was called on to perform perhaps their most demanding tasks.

The 24th North Vietnamese Regiment had been identified and was operating in the area just north of Dak To. The 104th Vietnamese Regional Force Company, manning an isolated outpost at Toulorong (coord 2B 138360) had been harassed by enemy fire since the end of April, and for the past six days had been under siege. The immediate enemy force estimated as two reinforced North Vietnamese companies were subjecting the Toulorong outpost to mortar bombardment and had the ARVN's pinned down by heavy (12.7mm) machine gun fire from five well camouflaged and fortified positions. The Vietnamese outpost was near complete exhaustion of supplies and the danger of being overrun was imminent.

On 1 Jun 66 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company received from the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion the mission of reinforcing the Toulorong outpost with 64 Vietnamese Rangers staying at Kontum.

A reconnaissance flight of two armed UH-1B's and the C&C (Command & Control) aircraft were dispatched to Toulorong to ascertain the enemy's proximity, possible landing zones, flight routes and to draw enemy fire to confirm intelligence reports. By high recon it was determined that the best flight route would be along the river located in a valley NE of the finger of the ridge line where the beleaguered Vietnamese outpost was located. During low reconnaissance the two armed snips drew intense machine gun fire from two locations on a hill to the north overlooking the camp. The armed aircraft conducted recon by fire for approximately five minutes. They ascertained that the enemy was well dug in, with continuous observation and fields of fire of the only available LZ which was within the confines of the outpost proper.

Eight UH-1D's, five UH-1B'gunships and 1 C&C snip took part in lifting the 64 Vietnamese Rangers and 2000 pounds of supplies into Toulorong outpost. The troops were picked up at Kontum and ferried north in staggered trail, flights of two with a 15 second interval between flights. Four sorties of A1-E fighter aircraft failed to silence the enemy's machine guns. The five UH-1B's preceded the flight by five minutes and conducted an intense pre-strike and then formed on the inbound UH-1D's and escorted them into the 4500 foot pinnacle landing zone, attempting to divert the enemy fire from the troop laden snips and to provide suppressive fire. During the approach into the landing zone and in the LZ the helicopters were under heavy fire. The combat assault was successfully completed, but one UH-1D and one UH-1B had sustained damage from hostile fire.

The following morning on 2 Jun 66, the 48th AHC received the mission of delivering 1200 pounds of cargo and a signal relay team of 13 men from the 101st Airborne Division who were to become an important communications link for Operation Hawthorne which was just kicking off. Again throughout the night the Toulorong outpost had been under heavy attack. Three UH-1B's and five UH-1D's accomplished the mission. As the armed helicopters began striking the enemy positions the first flight started their approach under intense hostile fire. The pilot of the lead aircraft, WO Jimmie Kunn, was hit by enemy fire seconds after landing in the landing zone. The other aircraft continued to land in spite of heavy enemy fire. When the two aircraft loaded with cargo landed the ground troops recently landed were pinned down. The 48th AHC crew chiefs and gunners displayed exceptional bravery when they left their machine gun stations and unloaded the 1200 pounds of critically needed cargo. The mission was successfully accomplished but five of the aircraft

participating in the lift received damage by hostile fire. One UH-1B received major damage and the UH-1D's received numerous hits throughout the cabin sections and tail booms. The pilot, WO Nunn, was wounded in the right forearm and evacuated to the field hospital at Pleiku. WO Nunn was also hit in his chest protector, which saved his life. Crew chief, SP5 Marlan H. Kohnert was wounded by shrapnel on the back of both hands. He was treated at the 48th AMC dispensary and returned to duty.

These heroic actions by the crews of the 48th AMC, who displayed exceptional devotion to duty and professional skill, were responsible for the successful re-inforcement of the besieged Toulouong outpost on 1 Jun 66 and for emplacing an important signal relay team the following day.

Throughout Operation Hawthorne, which commenced on 1 Jun 66, the 48th AMC was in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with priority of mission support to the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. Operation Hawthorne was a highly successful operation in which the 101st Airborne, later reinforced by elements of the 1st Air Cav Division, encircled an estimated 1200 North Vietnamese Regular troops. American long range bombers unloaded 432 tons of 500 and 1000 pound bombs in what military spokesmen called "one of the largest" bombings of the war. The bomb raid was on target and enemy casualties mounted into the hundreds. The 48th AMC, as the statistical analysis points out (below), played a large part in the successful exploitation of the bombing. Individual acts of heroism were numerous and too large a number for these pages. Several night missions were conducted and most of these of an emergency nature such as medical evacuations and resupply of food, water, and ammunition. On one occasion on 7 Jun, three Joker aircraft (UH-1B) returning from an escort mission intercepted an urgent radio call from "B" Battery, 1/320th Artillery. They were being overrun, in fact the enemy had already taken one gun position. The Jokers made six gun runs each with 2.75 inch rockets, 40mm grenades, and 7.62mm machine guns and through exceptionally close air-to-ground support stymied the enemy attack long enough to allow the artillerymen to regroup and successfully counter attack. On 10 Jun 66 a Marine helicopter crashed into the Mountain North of the 48th AMC camp. Captain Milton J. Sandas Jr., Flight Surgeon, 48th AMC, hearing that one of the pilots had a possible broken back volunteered to go to the sight where he climbed down a rope from a hovering helicopter to the injured aviator. Doc Sandas, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability was credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men.

#### Statistical Data: Operation Hawthorne

Total hours flown	787.1
Total sorties	3247
Number combat assault sorties	1183
Total cargo hauled (Tons)	73.1
Total passengers carried	4322
Aircraft hit by enemy fire	10
Aircraft shot down	0
Average aircraft availability	86.5%
UH-1B	87.0%
UH-1D	86.0%
Structures damaged	16
Structures destroyed	7
VC KBA	36 (body count)
	5 (est)
Crew members wounded	
pilots	1
crew chiefs	2
gunners	0



Emergency medical evacuation	62
Ammunition expended	
7.62mm	191,640 rounds
40mm	3,155 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	471
JP-4 fuel consumed	61,400 gallons
Aircraft accidents or incidents	0

On 14 Jun 66 the first edition of the 48th AHC Blue Star was printed. Realizing the value of having a unit newspaper both for members of the company and as a means of keeping the folks back home advised of our whereabouts and accomplishments, Major Koper, with the support of the other field companies came up with their ideas for a unit paper. Captain James I. McDowell was assigned with the mission of seeing it through. The paper was greeted with overwhelming success and many a budding writer was discovered among company personnel.

Operation Beauragard (24 Jun to 14 Jul 66) found the 48th AHC again in support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1/327th AHC of Bn. The purpose of the operation was to exploit the success of Operation Hawthorne. It was suspected that the remnants of the battered 24th North Vietnamese Regiment would attempt to escape to the west into Cambodia and Laos. The size of the remaining enemy force was unknown. Operation Beauragard took place in the valley Northwest of Dak To. Sporadic contact was made throughout the operation but significant contact with a large enemy force was never accomplished. The 48th AHC continued their normal support of C&C aircraft, resupply missions, medical evacuations and combat assaults, carrying troops to and from the battle field in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In addition they accomplished numerous missions in support of ARVN forces and American Special Forces throughout the tactical zone.

#### Statistical Data: Operation Beauragard

Total hours flown	948.7
Total sorties flown	3770
Total combat assault sorties	1264
Total cargo hauled (tons)	74.3
Total passengers carried	4602
Aircraft hit by enemy fire	0
Aircraft shot down by enemy fire	0
Average aircraft availability	91%
UH-1B	88%
UH-1D	94%
Structures damaged	37
Structures destroyed	7
VC KBA	1
Crew members wounded	
pilots	1
crew chiefs	1
Emergency medical evacuations	21
Ammunition expended	
7.62mm	157,880 rounds
40mm	2,091 rounds
2.75 inch rockets	345
Aircraft accidents and incidents	
UH-1D (accident)	1
UH-1B (incident)	1

Far short of the 5 to 6 months reported for the 48th AHC's duration at Dak To, it received its travel orders and it was on the move again. The aircrews departed Dak To on 15 July 1966 and again had a couple of days at Phan Rang. The rear party of 1 UH-1D and 2 UH-1B's remained at Dak To with the rear echelon of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and then rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa. The remainder of the company loaded vehicles and equipment aboard USAF C-130 aircraft on 17 July and departed for Tuy Hoa.

Due to security considerations this unit history will be concluded at this point. The 48th AHC at Tuy Hoa participated in Operation John Paul Jones (20 Jul 66 to 4 Sep 66) and is now participating in Operation ~~War~~ again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div.

At this writing the 48th AHC has 18 aviators of the original 55 aviators that accompanied the unit to Vietnam. All of these personnel will be rotating by 4 Nov 66. The company is presently undergoing reorganization with the remaining personnel and new personnel are arriving daily.

Command of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1)(A) changed from Major Harry Eck Roper Jr. to Major Joel J. Williams on 26 September 1966.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: SONGS AND POEMS WRITTEN AND SANG BY BLUE STARS

1. A Chopper Pilot's Day
2. A Message From My Heart
3. American Fighting Man
4. Army Aviation
5. Ballad of the Gunners
6. Blue Stars
7. Chopper Jockey
8. Green Flight Pay
9. Gunship on Ly Tail
10. Have Chopper - Will Hover
11. Huey - Flying Man
12. In Our Own Little World
13. Ol' Phan Rang
14. Phan Rang Tower
15. Red Hot Pilot
16. Short Timer's Blues
17. Sixteen Hours
18. Sky king
19. The Best Don't Play, They Mean Business
20. The 48th
21. The Joker's Song
22. The Medic
23. Tôn Thất (Royal Family)
24. Victor Charlie
25. When My Tour's All Done This Fall

A CHOPPER PILOT'S DAY

Ly: Capt Jack Horne  
CWO Bill Moore

In the early morning hours  
Before the sun is bright  
You can hear the turbines turning  
As the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over  
The pilots on their way  
To face the fears and danger  
Of a chopper pilot's day.

CHORUS: A chopper pilot's day Ly boys  
A chopper pilot's day  
We face the fear and danger  
Of a chopper pilot's day.

The VC will be hiding  
For they know so very well  
Should a gunship pilot spot them  
He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air  
The landing zone is near  
The flight turns on it's final leg  
No place for cowards here.

CHORUS: - - - - -

Machine guns chatter and rockets flash  
An awesome sound and sight  
But a welcomed one for us it is  
For it causes Charlie's fright.

Our choppers settle on no-man's-land  
And now our troops depart  
Charging into battle  
To win, in each man's heart.

CHORUS: - - - - -

An extra second on the ground  
Could cost a pilot's life  
And leave a tearful mother  
Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees  
There comes a blinding flash  
On our right a ship is hit  
We watch the awful crash.

CHORUS: - - - - -

(See next col)

A gunship comes onto the scene  
To cover the crew's escape  
A slick ship lands to pick them up  
We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise  
Into the morning sky  
A lucky crew is on that ship  
It was not their day to die.

CHORUS: - - - - -

All crews are now accounted for  
We hear our leader say  
We breathe a sigh, "We made it,  
Through a chopper pilot's day.

---

BLUE STARS

By: 1LT Ronald K. Dannon  
(Tune - Sky Ball Mail)

There she flies-look at her go  
She's a 48th-a sight to behold  
Flying thru the sky all day  
Take a warning and don't get in her way.

A group of pilots-each one a man  
He knows his job-like the palm of his hand  
Name the job-and they'll do it great  
They're the Blue Stars-from the 48th.

They've got a guncrew-that just won't quit  
Their blazing rockets-their guns do spit  
Name the place-and point it out  
And the Jokers will wipe it off the map.

Hit an LZ-late at night  
No mistakes-do it right  
Tracers burning-flares so bright  
Have no fear---  
Blue Stars are out tonight.

---

ROYAL FAMILY  
By: Sgt Ronald K. Dameron  
(Tune - New York Girls)

From California I traveled  
Cross waters far and wide  
And nary a person did I know  
Nor what ahead did lie  
Traveled for a day or so  
My home from me grew you  
And then before two days had passed  
I fell in Vietnam

CHORUS:  
Singing Mamasan chews beetlenut  
Babysan no clothes  
Papasan's a VC  
But you ain't supposed to know  
You can tell them one and all  
For Charlie is their names  
And Mamasan and Babysan  
Like Papasan Same Same

Papasan works in the field  
Harvesting the rice  
Waves at choppers overhead  
Papasan's so nice  
But just forget and turn your back  
And fly your chopper low  
And Papasan will shoot you down  
With his M-1 hoe.

CHORUS: - - - - -

You go to the market place  
To spend your hard earned P's  
And the people in the market  
They say come buy from me  
They say since you American  
And you so very nice  
They'll sell you anything you want  
At only twice the price.

CHORUS: - - - - -

The pretty girls in Saigon  
Will try and lead you on  
You buy they tea  
They hold your hand  
But there's just one thing wrong  
When you say you are fini  
And you have no more pay  
They say go home American  
You wasted my whole day

CHORUS: - - - - -

(See next column)

Listen to me people  
And if you have your doubts  
I can tell you everything  
I know what it's about  
When Papasan and Mamasan  
Try and take you in  
Just say I really like you  
But I think you're number 10.

CHORUS: - - - - -

FORWARD OF THE GUNNERS  
By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace  
(Tune - Green Berets)

We're chopper gunners of the forty . . .  
Always in the shooting and never . . .  
Mighty handy with a sixty-gun  
Sometimes there's glory but it's never fun

Armor vests upon our chests  
With machine guns and rockets we're the be  
About our shooting we can brag  
Because each man has been a "laig".

We got a letter from Ho Chi Minh  
Wanted to know if we thought we'd win  
Our answer to him was mighty sweet  
Went out and killed 200 of his "elite"

Armor vests upon our chests  
With machine guns and rockets we're the be  
One of our gunners went down today  
Old Charlie will have a lot of hell to pay.

For some we hear there is a test  
But as chopper gunners we're the best  
And if we go down in flames some night  
Our guns will rattle till the end of flight.

Armor vests upon our chests  
With machine guns and rockets we're the bes  
One gunner went down from 500 today  
Came crawling in that night, said every-  
things OK!

Back at home his sweetheart waits  
But her gunner soldier has met his fate  
He just re-upped, specialist stripes he got  
And he's still wearing that old brain pot.

Armor vests upon our chests  
With machine gun and rockets we're the best  
You can tell old Charlie that we're here  
to stay  
Or they'll send us back D.O.A.

GATHER AT THE RIVER

Taken from one of CWU James McCartt's  
"Sermons on the Beach"

Gather around me brothers, and to-  
night I'll gonna preach to you about the  
greatest sin - the greatest evil - and  
the greatest home wrecker that this ol'  
world has ever known! Yes tonight I'll  
gonna speak that topic - DRINK! Do you  
realize my friend that alcohol dullens  
your brain and makes you do things that  
you would never do if you were sober?  
Do you realize that alcohol will tear  
your body gradually apart and have you  
looking twice your actual age? Do you  
furthermore realize that alcohol will  
break up your home, cause your wife to  
leave you, and your children to despise  
you? Do you know that it can bring you  
personal, financial, as well as other  
worries and headaches?

My friend! Listen to me! Stop!  
Stop right now! Give up your drink and  
throw that glass away! Cast all thoughts  
of it aside and start anew this very  
moment!

My friend -- If I owned all the  
beer in Phan Rang - I would pour it into  
the river! If I owned all the whiskey  
in Vietnam - I would pour it into the  
river! If I owned all the Scotch and  
Bourbon in the United States - I would  
pour them into the river! If I owned all  
of the liquor in this whole wide world -  
I would pour it into the river!

Now will the congregation please  
stand as we sing --- "Shall we Gather  
at the River"!

CHORUS: Shall we gather at the river  
The beautiful, the beautiful  
river  
Gather with the Saints at the  
river  
That flows by the throne of God.

---

RED HOT PILOT

By: Capt Donald A. Halsey  
(Tune - Long Tall Texan)

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an HU1B  
(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)  
Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an HU1B  
(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)  
When people come by way  
They look at me and say  
U-Rah U-Rah is that you HU1B

Well I fly through the jungle kinda low  
and slow  
Keepin' old Charlie way down in his hole  
When he hears me coming well he knows  
darn well  
If I see him I'll blast his soul in  
hell.

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron  
bird  
(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)  
For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron  
bird  
(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)  
When people come by way  
They look at me and say  
U-Rah U-Rah is that your bird?

Well I fly so low I knock the limbs off  
the trees  
Keeping old Charlie right down on his  
knees  
When he hears me coming he jumps right in  
the grass  
And he hides in his hole until I go home  
for gas.

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge  
of the sky  
(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the  
sky)  
Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge  
of the sky  
(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the  
sky)  
When people come by way  
They look at me and say  
Hy-O-Hy is you the scourge?

---

THE JOKER SONG

By: SP5 Larry Egan  
(Tune - Battle of New Orleans)

CHORUS:

We fired our guns and the VC started  
dying  
There wasn't as many as there was a  
while ago  
we fired once more and they began to run  
down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Major Jones said we'll catch 'em by  
surprise  
We won't fire our guns til we see where  
they lie  
Then we'll swoop in low and let our  
rockets go  
Right down on Victor Charlie's own front  
door.

CHORUS:

Well, they ran in the bush and they ran  
in the bamboo  
They ran in the tunnels where our rockets  
couldn't go  
They ran so fast that the guns couldn't  
catch 'em  
down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Victor Charlie we caught him in a nest  
when we got thru shooting the place was  
a mess  
When the Jokers go on a shooting spree  
like this  
You know darn well that we hardly ever  
miss.

CHORUS:

Well, we fired our guns and the tracers  
started burning  
we fired at Charlie who was waiting down  
below  
we fired once more and they began to run  
down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Guts and guns are the Jokers biggest  
pride  
Our only biggest problem is to shoot 'em  
in the eye  
when our ammo runs out and fuel gets low  
we head back to Tuy Hoa and get some more.

CHORUS:

we fired our guns and the VC started  
dying  
There wasn't as many as there was awhile  
ago  
we fired once more and they began to run  
down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Joker 1 & 2 with 3 & 4 there's 5, 8 & 10  
set to go  
with our turbines a singing and engines  
at it  
we pull collective pitch while the sun  
began to set

CHORUS:

Once we were all up and really got  
flying  
we went to the area where Charlie was  
before  
all the Victor Charlies that a run into  
niding  
Have sworn not to tangle with the  
Jokers anymore.

---

THE BEST JOCKEY PLAY, THEY MEAN BUSINESS

By: SP5 Orville L. Stover

Victor Charlie at Ol' Dak To  
Thought he was smart but he didn't know  
That there were Jokers just standing by  
Always ready to go and fly  
Now they have guts and they have guns  
and they will put Charlie on the run

The first Platoon, now they don't care  
They are too scared to go anywhere  
The second platoon is not too bad  
But when they must go they all look sad  
The Joker Platoon, they are the best  
When they go out they put Charlie to rest  
We're sorry about that but we must say  
when we have a mission we just can't play.

(See next col)



IN A LITTLE WORLD

By: The 40th  
(Tune - Henry the 8th)

I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am  
I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am  
Called for a flare the other night  
Gosh Almighty what a terrible sight  
Now I see the airfield - Airfield?  
Looks so funny upside down  
I'm an all weather pilot Archie  
Archie the Harrell I am

I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am  
I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am  
I run the mess hall around this place  
Gosh Almighty what a terrible disgrace  
I don't eat in the mess hall - mess Hall?  
Wouldn't eat there to save my life  
I'm a cook's supervisor - Horne  
Little Jack Horne I am

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am  
I'm John the Jenks I am, I am  
Went for a flight the other day  
Somehow I seem to have lost my way  
And now I'm sitting in Song Be - Song Be?  
Forgot to turn my switches to start  
And now I'm using my checklist  
John the Jenks I am.

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am  
I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am  
Went for a flight the other day  
They tried to tell me that I lost my way  
But I know where I am - I am  
Never been lost in my life  
I'm map reading pilot Jones  
Cambodia Jones I am.

I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am  
I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am  
I fixed airplanes for my pay  
One just crashed the other day  
And now I must recover it - recover it?  
Wouldn't go out there to save my life  
I'll leave it there in the jungle  
Fixit 6 I am.

SKY KING

By: Capt Kim Kristofferson  
(Tune - Big Bad John)

Every morning at the line you could see  
him arrive  
About 5 foot 2 and weighed 185  
Kinda narrow at the shoulder  
And broad at the hips  
Everybody knew he didn't give a damn, Sky  
King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky

Some say Sky was born in New Orleans  
where he put himself a rotor on a sewing  
machine  
Cut his teeth on a collective pitch  
Ol' Sky was a low flyinson of a gun, Sky  
King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky

Then came the day at stagefield four  
When his engine quit and wouldn't run  
anymore  
Brave men sighed and hearts beat fast  
Everybody thought he'd breathed his last,  
Except Sky  
He just pushed the old pitch right down to  
the floor  
But the damn rotor blade wouldn't turn  
anymore  
So his rear packered up and with a  
terrible sound  
He just sucked the old chopper right off  
the ground, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short Fat Sky

Now the ship wasn't hurt but it took half  
the class  
To get the seat cover out of Sky King's  
rear, Sky King

They never reopened that worthless strip  
Just put a marble stand on top of it  
On that stand these words are seen  
There ain't no butt that can pucker  
Like ol' Sky King

Phan Rang Tower

By: Capt Kris Aristofferson

Hello Phan Rang tower this is Blue Star 851  
I'm 5 miles from your airfield and my fuel is almost gone  
My engine sneezes & coughing and my tack needles have split  
You better call your crash crew out this damn thing's gonna quit.

Hello Blue Star 851, this is Phan Rang tower  
we can't call our crash crew but this is their coffee hour  
and we had just as soon you didn't land here for awhile  
because our visibility is not a half a mile.

Hello Phan Rang tower this is Blue Star 851  
I'd love to put this landing off but that just can't be done  
My engine's belching fire and I'm running out of gas  
I've got to set this chopper down before I have a crash

This is Phan Rang tower calling Blue Star 851  
we'd just like to know what kind of flight you are on  
Our Operation's officer says you have not been cleared  
You'll be grounded thirty days if you land that chopper here.

Hello Phan Rang tower this is Blue Star 851  
I'm up in pilot's heaven and my flying days are done  
Tell my old commander that I'm sorry that I crashed  
Tell your Operation's Officer that he can kiss my \_\_\_\_!

THE MEDIC

By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace

We have a little tent setting in the sand  
We call ourselves the Medic clan  
With pills in a bottle and syringe in our hand  
Ain't a darn thing we're afraid of in this land  
"Oh Big Bad Medic".

We can see out in the other day  
Lionel's like the pearly gates were far away  
We threw him on a stretcher, pulled down his pants  
Then stuck him in the rear and he got up and danced.

We sit around at night drinking alcohol  
And throwing syringes at our little tent walls  
Staying in practice so we don't miss  
We stuck them with a needle but they get no kiss.

We got a doc, he's pretty straight  
For weekends he's gonna get us a Ford V-8  
Gonna load it with Lamsons and head for the hills  
Disease! We've got the market cornered on pills.

Went to the latrine and looked on the wall  
Was a big sign "Unsanity for all"  
I knew it was put there by the Medic clan  
So I went out yelling "Lord help me man".

---

VICTOR CHARLIE

By: Unknown  
(Time - back of ages)

Victor Charlie at Plei  
Threw a hand grenade at me  
So I caught it in my palm  
Threw it back, and he was gone  
Victor Charlie at Plei  
Thanks a lot you S.O.B.

---

FROM SILVER PAY

By: Unknown

(Tune - Green Beret)

Silver wings upon my chest  
I fly my chopper above the best  
I can take more dough that way  
But I can't wear no Green Beret

Tennis shoes upon his feet  
Some people call him sneaky Pete  
He sneaks around the woods all day  
wearing that funny Green Beret

It's no jungle floor for me  
I've never seen a rubber tree  
1000 men must take the test  
while I fly home and take a rest.

and while I fly my chopper home  
and leave him out there all alone  
That is where Green Berets belong  
Out in the jungle writing songs.

and when my little boy is grown  
don't leave him out there all alone  
Just let him fly and give him pay  
Cause he can't spend no Green Beret.

and when my little boy is old  
his silver wings all lined with gold  
he then will wear a Green Beret  
In the big parade on St Patrick's Day.

---

CHOPPER JOCKEY

By: 1LT Ronald A. Barron

(Tune - 16 tons)

Some people say a man is made out of rock  
but a pilot ain't nothin' but a flying  
jock

Flies his chopper all the way  
Sings his songs and saves his pay  
CHORUS:

You fly 16 hours-and what do you get  
One sore rear and a pound of sweat.

I awoke one morning when the sun didn't  
shine  
Major Macford said-men don't ever mind  
Cass where you're going you won't need  
a light  
The rule of the mission is suicide.

(See next col)

CHORUS: - - - - -

Now we're not scared-for we're still  
asleep

But Major Roper begins to speak  
Said if you go down-here's what to do  
Don't call me-I'll call you.

CHORUS: - - - - -

We start our choppers and head for the sky  
Don't use lights unless you wanta die  
Motors hitting-people start to scream  
I close my eyes and hope it's a dream.

CHORUS: - - - - -

Intense he says it's a big LZ  
You can land 40 ships all in a "V"  
but after we get there we hear the same  
line

"better try landing one at a time."

CHORUS: - - - - -

---

ARMY AVIATION

By: 1LT Ronald A. Barron

This world's a free world  
The sky is our goal  
Lift your eyes up to the heavens  
The Army's on the go

CHORUS:

Army aviation-flying above the best  
Army aviation-flies away and leaves the  
rest

Never a job too big  
Never one too small  
Army aviators  
Qualified to do them all.

any time - day or night  
whether clouds or heavy rain  
They can do the job for you  
That's the way our men are trained.

CHORUS:

we've got the big ones-got some little  
ones too  
Choppers, fixed wing - you just name it -  
any that you could choose.

We've passed the big test  
Now we're in full stride  
Part of the greatest Army  
and serving it with pride.

WHEN MY TOUR'S ALL DONE THIS FALL

By: Capt Donald A. Kelsey  
(Time - When my works all done this fall)

A group of jolly pilots discussing plans  
at ease

Says one I'll tell you something boys  
If you will listen please

I'm a chopper pilot and now I'm dressed  
in rags  
I used to be a tough one boys  
And go on great big jags

But I have got a home boys, and a good  
one you all know  
Although I havn't seen it  
Since long, long, long, ago

I'm going home to Dixie once more to see  
them all  
I'm going to see my wife and kids  
When my tour's all done this fall

That very night this pilot went out to  
fly some guard  
The night was dark and cloudy  
And stormin' very hard

The VC they got surprised and ran in  
wild stampede  
This pilot tried to shoot them down  
While flying at full speed

His engine through it failed him, his  
chopper it did fall  
That boy won't see his wife and kids  
When his tour's all done this fall

His body was so mangled the boys all  
thought him dead  
They picked him up real gently  
And laid him on his bed

He opened his blue eyes and looking  
all around  
He beckoned for his partners  
To sit down on the ground

George you take my helmet and Bill can  
have my bed  
And Jim you take my pistol  
After I am dead

But think of me kindly when you look upon  
them all  
For I'll not see my wife and kids  
When my tour's all done this fall.

THE 48TH

By: The 3rd (Guts & Guns) Platoon

Born at Fort Benning on 5 July  
The year was 1965

They had no choppers but they didn't care  
If they ever got alerted they would go  
anywhere

Then one day the order came down  
To go to Vietnam and put Charlie under  
ground

They sailed from California one bright  
November day  
And set their feet upon the sand at the  
seaport near San Bay

They climbed up on the Army tracks and  
everybody sang  
We're here to whip on Charlie let's  
start at old Phan Rang

They finally got their choppers  
It sure did take a while  
They headed out for Tuy Hoa, all had a  
great big smile

They left their mark on Tuy Hoa and moved  
to Phan Thiet  
They put the hurt on Charlie but they  
were not finished yet

At Nhon Co and Cheo Reo everything was  
slow  
So they all picked up their bags and  
moved to old Lak To

They finally got their camp set up, They  
worked into the night  
Charlie knew they had moved in but Charlie  
was scared to come and fight

Operations got the mission and the CO  
yelled come on  
We finally found old Charlie, he's hid  
in Tommorong

They pulled pitch on the choppers, they  
never have been late  
What Charlie didn't know, it was the  
mighty 48th

SINGLES

By: SP5 Thomas Hughes  
SP4 Paul Jagla  
(Tune - 16 tons)

I wake up one morning when the sun didn't  
shine  
I picked up my tool box and I walked to  
the line  
My tail hook was sagging, engine oil  
needs filled  
If Charlie don't get you then this  
chopper will

You fly 16 hours and what do you get  
another C1 and we're not through yet  
Intermediate Inspection and the DI is due  
Crank her up, we have a mission for you

Turbines roaring, blades spinning fast  
783 has a full load of gas  
Off on the first mission of this long day  
Sundown looks a long time away

You fly 16 hours and what do you get  
another C1 and you're not through yet  
We just came in, so what do we do  
We pull 9 hours of guard duty too

Gunner and crew chief standing by  
briefing is over and we're ready to fly  
Griping 'bout the chopper and gunner's  
job too  
Seems that the pilots have nothing to do

You fly 16 hours and what do you get  
another earn job and you're not through  
yet  
Bullets in the plane and the seat on our  
pants  
Ballast in the fuel tank so we're out of  
gas

Now the weather was stormy and the sky  
was black  
Ole 783 ought to be back  
St Peter don't you call us cause we  
can't come  
We're in this weather on another milk run

You fly 16 hours and what do you get  
another tail chevin' and we're not through  
yet  
The pilots are off in a day's time  
But crew chief and gunner are stuck on  
the thing.

AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN

By: Members of the 48th

I'm an American fighting man  
I serve my country where I can  
and every place there's trouble is my home  
Don't know where I'll be tomorrow  
Maybe joy and maybe sorrow  
I'm a rolling stone.

CHORUS:

Hear my song, hear my destiny  
A call to me, to travel on  
I know when I die that I won't be at home.

I'll not surrender of my own free will  
I will stay and fight until  
The last breath leaves my body cold  
still  
I've been here and I've been there  
well I've been damn near everywhere  
and I learn more the further on I go.

If by chance I'm overwhelmed  
I'll keep on fighting from a prison cell  
and let my captors know that I'll resist  
Clean escape will be my goal  
and I will never sell my soul  
To those who'd take the freedom of a man.

If I'm questioned I will tell them  
Nothing less, I roast in hell  
I know my friends can spend on me  
many a question, ask me questions  
without answers  
but from me, they'll never learn.

I will never forget that I  
am an American fighting man  
and I will give my life for my home  
I know I will show the why  
my fight is mine... my home is my.

GUNSHIP ON MY TAIL

By: Capt Donald M. Kelsey  
(Tune - Tiger on My Tail)

I've got a gunship on my tail its plain  
to see  
And I won't be lurch when he gets through  
with me  
I'm losing weight and turning kind of pale  
It looks like I've got a gunship on my  
tail.

Everyday he chases me across that jungle  
floor.  
There just ain't no safe place anymore  
Then at night the Mohawks come with SLAR  
and infared  
Soutimes I just wish that I were dead.

The other day we slipped upon there  
artillery  
We were set to gun those redlegs down  
Then with guns ablazing they came out of  
the sky  
And all around men began to die,

We were set to overrun a place called  
Toumoreng  
Thought we had it made but we were wrong  
At the crucial moment the gunships came  
on in  
A raising hell and spoiled our plans again.  
I hate these gunships more than  
anything around  
Thought I would try and shoot one down  
I cracked down on the leadship but his  
wingman came around  
And sent me to the happy hunting ground.

HUEY FLYING MAN

By: 1LT Ronald K. Dameron  
(Tune - Truck Driving Man)

Well I hop aboard my old chopper  
And then like a flash I'm gone  
I get that old Huey a rolling  
I'll be on my way to fight the Cong

**CHORUS:**

Well if you pour me another cup of coffee  
For it is the best in the land  
Then I'll crank my old Huey and get moving  
For I'm a chopper flying man.

Had a briefing just this morning  
Said they had Charlie on the run  
It's up to the Blue Star chopper pilots  
To make sure Charlie's work is done.  
CHORUS: - - - - -

The Jokers are cranked and a raring  
To clear a path for the slicks  
Their rockets a thundering into mountains  
I bet old Charlie's getting sick.  
CHORUS: - - - - -

The slicks are coming up on final  
formation packed in so tight  
Jokers a flying on the flanks  
Charlie's gonna bite the dust tonight  
CHORUS: - - - - -

The slicks have dropped off their pack  
Pulling pitch and leaving the LZ  
Jokers make the final pass  
Another mission now complete  
CHORUS: - - - - -

HAVE CHOPPER - WILL HOVER

By: 1LT Ronald K. Dameron

**CHORUS:**

We travel through the day  
We travel through the night  
any place anywhere  
Just name it - that's all right  
We're the men from the greatest state  
We all come from the 48th

We fly choppers - that's our life  
We do our job but never gripe  
We take the good along with the bad  
But the good is something that we ain't  
had.

CHORUS: \* \* \* \* \*

Come on got a mission - in the dark of  
the night  
And won't be back till its done just right  
After we're back and the sun goes down  
We'll start our Blue Star sounds  
CHORUS: - - - - -

Lift your eyes and follow us  
We'll lead the way - no trouble or fuss  
If you want something done  
And you want it done right.  
We're listed under Blue Star.  
And flying day and night.

(See next column)

Adaptation of the Blues

By: W. H. Donald A. Deaton  
(Tune - I Walk the Line)

Ol' Phun Kung

By: Unknown

If you're in trouble and find that you  
need aid

If Charlie's got you pinned down and  
you're afraid

If you want a chopper to come and set you  
free

Be a favor and don't call me.

If you are out of food and need some new  
recruits

Or if you want supplies and jungle boots

You say to drop them off in your LZ

Well would you take them from a thousand  
feet.

It's not that I mind Charlie or his  
friends

I just can't care about seeing them again

I'm getting short, and there's just one

more thing

I hate to ~~lose~~ loose old Charlie's aim.

For eleven months I was king of the road

I tried to carry more than my load

It's not that I mind flying with the gang

But I'm too short to play these games.

I'd like to leave this country far behind

This yellow streak is creeping up my  
spine

I've got to see the doc 'fore it's too  
late

I'm nearing my rotation date.

They say that Ol' Phun Kung's a hell of  
a place

The organization's a low down disgrace

There are Captains and Majors and Light  
Colonels too

Their hands in their pockets with nothing  
to do

They stand on the runway

They scream as they shout

About many things they know nothing about

For all they accomplish

They might as well be

Shoveling sand on the Isle of Capri

Singing - ding - ding

Shove it in your ear

Better things are coming bye and bye

Bull Crap!!



AERIAL GUNNERY FOR HELICOPTER

GENERAL.

Organic fire support for air assault operations is furnished by both conventional ground artillery units in air assault configurations and other divisional units equipped with armed helicopters. Units equipped with the aerial weapons systems are the aerial artillery battalion, cavalry squadron and weapons companies of the assault helicopter battalions. Target destruction or neutralization may be accomplished by either aerial or surface fire support means, but the extra mobility and range of aerial weapons units provide unique capabilities to support air assault operations. Although limited by ammunition and fuel load capacity, the armed helicopter units provide the commander with a significant increase and extension of available fire support beyond that provided by organic ground units of the airmobile division. To best employ armed helicopter units, commanders must know the principles, the weapons systems, and the procedures involved in target engagement.

PRINCIPLES OF ARMED HELICOPTER ATTACK.

Successful employment of aerial weapons units involves seven basic considerations. These are speed, surprise, volume and type of fire, control, target approach, timing and terrain utilization.

Speed in the actual attack is essential to achieve surprise and the maximum effect with minimum vulnerability. All attacks are normally executed at maximum speed. Consideration of speed is also involved in the time required to reach and engage distant targets, and in the reaction time of on-call armed helicopters.

Surprise is highly desirable to maximize the effect of fires on a target and reduce aircraft vulnerability. Prior planning to select the best approach routes and best methods of attack, together with maximum speed in the attack itself, give the best assurance of surprise. Timing the attack to take best advantage of weather and lighting conditions, and selecting times when troops in the target area are fatigued or not alert also enhances surprise.

Volume and type of fire must be carefully planned for maximum effect. Firepower commensurate with the nature of the target and target

both maximum effect and minimum self-sustaining expenditure.

Control on the attack includes all measures which best take advantage of the possibilities involved. Ingenuity must be exercised to achieve surprise or deception so that application of force is made at the exact time and in the manner best suited to the target. Target engagement by a single aircraft is rare, and in nearly all cases, two or more aircraft under a single flight leader engage the target. The flight leader must closely coordinate and control all aircraft throughout the entire attack. Experience, judgment, instantaneous communication and team performance are prerequisites to control. Control also involves the close coordination of helicopter attacks with the operations of other types of aircraft, troops on the ground, and supporting elements.

Target approach is normally made from the direction of greatest target vulnerability. Other factors such as terrain which offers covered or concealed approaches, wind which offers either silent approach, position of the sun, and multiple approaches, suitable for simultaneous attack from several directions must be quickly analyzed and exploited. This decision, by the flight leader, is perhaps the most critical element in target engagement.

Timing includes both the selection of the general time period of the attack and the more important precise coordination between aircraft to insure simultaneous target engagement by all attacking elements. The degree of success of the attack is, in most cases, closely related to the degree of coordination of attacking elements.

Terrain is utilized in the attack to cover the approach and the break from the target. Again, skillful planning and control is the key to success. Achievement of surprise, silent approach and simultaneous massing of fires require that the flight leader utilize all terrain possibilities to best advantage.

#### WEAPONS SYSTEMS.

The weapons systems in use within the airborne division may be broadly categorized as area and point for armed artillery units, suppressive and area for the cavalry, and suppressive fire delivery types for the weapons companies of the lift battalions. For specific preplanning missions,

fire support units may be employed in addition to the mission; on normal operations, supporting aerial weapons units with a task force will include a mix of weapons suitable for all anticipated targets.

The aerial artillery battalion is armed with the M3 area type weapons system which consists of two fixed pods of 24-2. 75 inch rockets each, mounted one on each side of the UH-1B helicopter. The rate of fire is six pairs of rockets per second. Minimum range, determined by fuse arming, is 300 meters. Maximum effective range is 2,500 meters, although true maximum range is over 6,000 meters. Total rounds in each load is 48, each with a six meter bursting radius, thus each aircraft load in salvo is roughly equivalent to one battery volley of conventional 105mm artillery. Fired intermittently, the M3 may also be utilized in the suppressive fire role.

Suppressive fire weapons of the weapons companies includes the M2 and M6 machine gun systems. The M2 system utilizes two 7.62mm M60c fixed machine guns, one on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute for each gun, with a total load of 550 rounds per gun. An elevation range of nine degrees may be obtained, and guns may be elevated at the rate of six degrees per second or depressed at nine degrees per second. Effective range extends to 400 meters; with 800 meters maximum range. The M6 system is roughly equivalent to two M2 systems, but with greater flexibility. The same basic M60c machine guns are utilized, two on each side of the helicopter. Guns may be elevated to 15 degrees inboard and 70 degrees outboard. The total rate of fire, using all four guns, is 2,400 rounds per minute.

The M6, a combination of the M6 machine gun system with two 7-round pods of 2.75 inch rockets added, gives the commander a system with a high degree of flexibility of employment. Having both rockets and machine guns makes it suitable for area and suppressive type fire.

The target systems of the aerial artillery are now limited to the M22, in which six wire-guided missiles are mounted on racks, three on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is one per minute. Effective ranges are 500 to 3,000 meters.

## TARGET ENGAGEMENT.

In addition to the factors discussed above in principles of attack, effectiveness of the aerial weapons unit is dependent upon the teamwork and skill of both the gunner and pilot. With rigid systems, where the pilot is also the gunner, accuracy is determined by the pilot's ability to maintain coordinated flight throughout his firing run. Any uncoordinated turning maneuver during a firing run will result in error in both range and deflection. Gunnery skill, acquired only through practice and experience, is the ultimate factor in successful aerial helicopter gunnery. The specific attack pattern for any target may vary widely, and must be tailored to each situation.

The flight patterns of helicopter elements armed with the M2 or M6 machine gun systems involve wide variations, but the normal firing run begins at a range of 300 meters from the target and terminates within 100 meters of the target. Accuracy is inversely proportional to range, thus fire becomes more accurate as the helicopter approaches the target. During engagement, the helicopter dives at maximum speed. See Figure 1. The steeper the angle of attack, the smaller the range dispersion pattern. For maximum effect, regardless of the angle of attack, the long axis of the elliptical firing pattern should coincide with the long axis of the target. See Figure 2. In the delivery of suppressive fires, the weapons companies are most frequently utilized in escort and security roles, and to secure landing zones during air assaults. Targets engaged are usually targets of opportunity in and around the landing zone. During this type mission, helicopters are employed in trail formation.

The M22 missile system provides the division with an organic airborne anti-armor capability. The M22 is employed only against point targets, normally armored vehicles. Since the missile flight is wire-guided, an unobstructed line of sight between the gunner and the target must be maintained for accurate delivery. Accuracy is dependent upon the skill of the gunner, who guides one round at a time to the target. Although hit probability is increased by shorter ranges, engagement at longer ranges reduces vulnerability, and enhances surprise. Attacking aircraft may use the pop-up technique and remain relatively stationary during engagement, or move slowly toward the target on a level or descending flight path. Lateral or turning movements with regard to the target tend to greatly reduce the gunner's accuracy.

Aerial artillery helicopters, equipped with the M3 rocket system, are the most flexible area fire weapons in the Air Assault arsenal, and

are utilized on a wide variety of missions. Assault preparatory fires are employed to neutralize enemy positions prior to assaults by placing direct aerial fire on the objective. During the actual assault direct suppressive fires are delivered in or near the landing zone by artillery helicopters which orbit in the area or remain on-call in forward larger areas until initial assault objectives are secured. The short response times of on-call aerial ships greatly extends the artillery fire power available to the commander. Orbit area selection is based upon the desires of the support ground commander, to whom the aerial artillery element commander and the fire support coordinator make recommendations. Known enemy strong point locations and local air defenses are primary considerations in recommending orbit areas. Counterbattery fire missions may be flown by aerial artillery ships, to include mine missions. Aerial artillery units are particularly effective in missions against radar-directed anti-aircraft systems, using a low level, multi-directional attack pattern under the radar screening capability. The flexible fire power and mobility of aerial artillery make it particularly useful to cover withdrawals of either ground or air assault units. The harassing and interdiction fire plans of conventional artillery units may be reinforced and greatly extended in depth by the employment of aerial artillery aircraft. The largest number of aerial rocket missions involve targets of opportunity, due to the unique ability of the armed helicopter to both locate and engage these targets. The two basic flight formations utilized in the attack of targets of opportunity are extended, in which aircraft fly in trail, and the spread, in which aircraft on line are able to fire simultaneously. In either formation, attacks may employ the pop-up technique, in which aircraft fly nap-of-the-earth climb rapidly to attack altitude at a distance of about 2,500 and 3,000 ranges between 1,500 and 1,000 meters. Disengagement occurs as soon as rockets are fired and attacking aircraft return to low altitudes without overflying the target. Except for targets of opportunity, aerial rocket fire missions are normally received from the reinforced or supported unit, or through artillery fire control channels. Fire mission requests and fire orders within the aerial artillery battalion are standardized to expedite receipt and completion of fire missions.

Surveillance reports are rendered after each mission, by the firing element leader to the unit which requested the mission. Damage and casualty assessments are vital intelligence and speedy, accurate reporting is essential to keeping the commander informed.

and more careful use of weapons, and the use of smoke and other means to maintain and disorganization of enemy forces and to preserve and recover defensive capability. The flame of incendiary provides an ideal late target for rocket aircraft. Illumination may be used to insure more delivery of fires, but at the expense of loss of surprise.

Six general rules of target engagement for the armed helicopter units are: Engage at maximum range, change the direction of each firing run, maintain continuous fire from initial engagement through disengagement, attack at maximum feasible air speed, attack from over known secure positions if possible, and avoid overflight of the target.

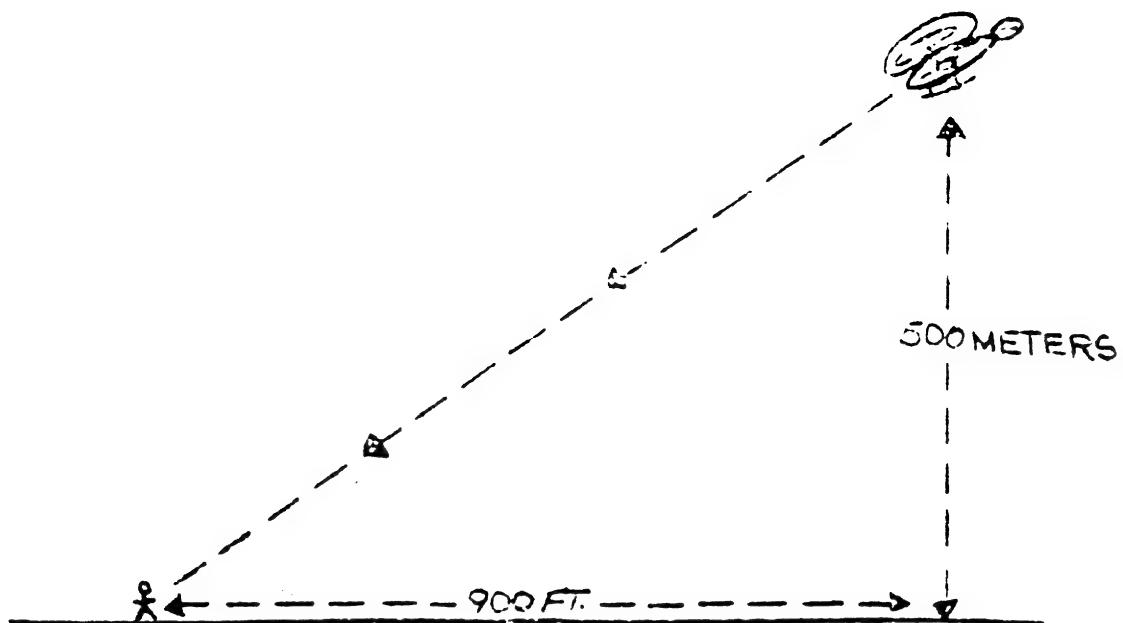


FIG 1

NORMAL ATTACK ANGLE WITH MACHINE GUNS

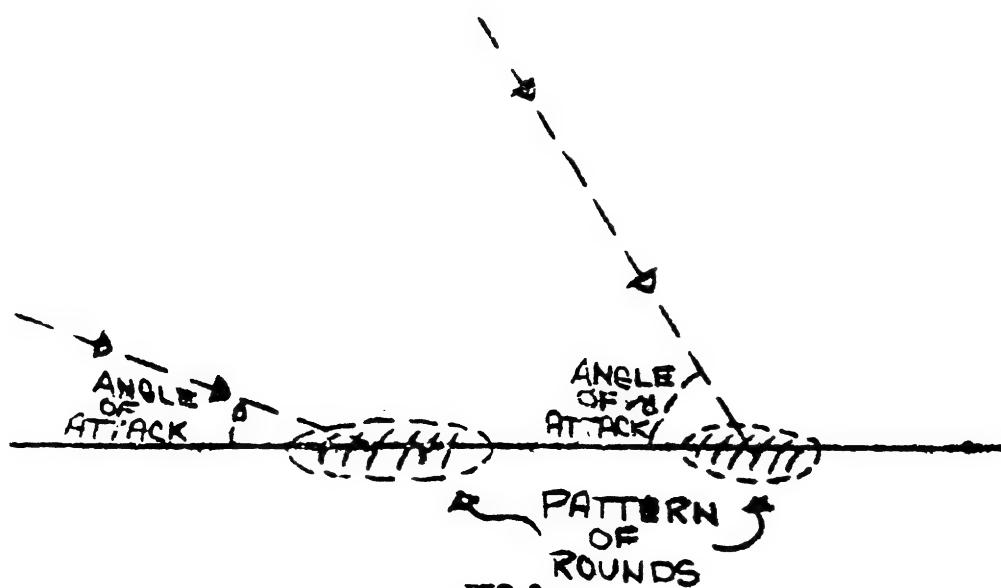


FIG 2

EFFECT OF ANGLE OF ATTACK



# BLUE STAR

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48th Avn Co (Airmobile) (Light)

IN COMBAT, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

## MORE THAN A DOCTOR

On 10 June 1966, five OH-46 Marine helicopters from Marble Mountain at Danang, Vietnam, were assigned the mission to fly to Dak To, Vietnam, to support the 101st Airborne Brigade evacuating their wounded personnel from field locations to the aid station. During the initial flight from Marble Mountain the OH-46s encountered bad weather resulting in one of them crashing into a 3000 foot mountain five miles Northeast of Dak To Airfield. Members of the 10th Aviation Battalion Pathfinder team volunteered to conduct the rescue operation. They were airlifted to the base of the mountain where the helicopter had crashed earlier that morning. Because of the rugged and dense terrain they had to jump eight to ten feet from the helicopter to the ground. While the 48th Aviation Company provided armed helicopter support, the Pathfinder team broke trail through dense foliage, jungle, and enemy held territory. The team arrived at approximately 1000 hours, six hours after the aircraft had gone down, finding that the engine pods, fuel cells, and tail assembly, which hang torn clear of the cockpit and cargo compartment, were still burning. The other portion of the helicopter was untouched by fire. The Pathfinders found the medic, who was a member of the downed helicopter crew, in a dazed condition walking around some 75 meters from the crash site. They guided him back, during which time they were receiving sporadic sniper fire from

## EDITORIAL

We on the BLUE STAR staff are encouraged by the overwhelming reception Vol I, No 1 received last week. I want to emphasize that this is your paper, and encourage all of you to contribute to its success by submitting articles, jokes, cartoons, crossword puzzles or what have you, to any staff member or just drop it in Operations. Write it on anything, just get it in.

I have heard a lot of talk about the 101st, the Cav, and other larger units getting all the glory (publicity). Perhaps you can use this paper as an outlet to your hometown newspaper and get yourselves in the news.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this issue and for the helpful hints we have received.

Staff: Captain James I. McDowell  
1/Lt Loyd R. Stroup  
SP/5 Stan W. Moreland  
SP/4 Don D. Wallace  
PFC Bill Van Oudenrode  
PFC Allen B. Doktor

## LEADING THE BLUE STARS

Our congratulations to CWO Shimon L. Temple, who this week became the first of the original Blue Star pilots to pass the 500 mark in hours flown in Vietnam.

As of 17 June, Mr. Temple had accumulated 516.1 hours in the 6½ months he's been flying in RVN.

That's being up in the clouds quite a lot.

(Cont pg 3, col 1)

## IS THE BLUE STAR CREWMAN GREATER?

A very common occurrence in the life of a Blue Star aviator is providing aerial support for friendly ground elements when only a helicopter can assist them in their relentless conflicts with the Viet Cong. At times, the Blue Stars have combined their efforts with other aviation units to successfully bring about the completion of their mission. These massive and complex operations are more commonly known as "Romeo Foxtrots". One of the more recent of these took place on the afternoon of 8 June in the vicinity of Dak To, RVN. At approximately 1600 hours, our Joker aircraft (armed helicopters) were called upon to lend gun support to the H-43 Air Force helicopters, known as "Pedros", which were evacuating casualties of the 1/327th Infantry Battalion. Landing was difficult so the Pedros were accomplishing their mission by winching up the troops.

Captain Ivan C. Swift, who has taken part in many such missions in the past, was now giving his assistance on the PRC 25 (radio) in Operations because of his recent appointment as assistant S-3 Officer.

The Jokers and Pedros relentlessly continued their mission. The time was now 2300 hours and Captain Swift was fully realizing that his duties as Operations Officer can be just as trying as those of an aviator who is physically taking part in the night's activities. The mission was coming to a successful end when an emergency re-supply call reached our assistant S-3. The ground forces were said to be "starving", not having eaten all day, and running short of medical supplies and ammo. The 48th reacted immediately. 32 cases of C-Rations, 30 pounds of medical supplies, 60 pounds of ammo, and 2 hours later, the mission was completed and our long day was over. After gathering up all the landing lights from the runway on the morning of 9 June, Captain Swift was finally headed for his bunk at 0130 hours. I'm sure Captain Swift slept soundly, and dreamt of all the bigger and better Romeo Foxtrots yet to come.

## CAN YOU IMAGINE.....

..... Sergeant Roggaw transferred to Washington, D.C. to take charge of the Pentagon cafeteria?

..... Sergeant Hall giving 3 sets of fatigues and a pair of boots to all personnel for Christmas?

..... "The Trip" being moved from Phan Rang to ..... to accommodate the 48th and promote American-Vietnamese relations?

..... CWO Swanger in the field?

..... SP/5 Dove not burning the pot roast?

..... CWO Mahrt making mail pick up just once? "Damn, I missed it again".

..... SP/5 Morales as a tower operator?

..... Captain Delius receiving PCS orders to Phan Rang?

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY.....

.....An officer known as "magnet ass"?

.....A crew chief known as "sis" or "nams"?

..... A gunner known as the "crier"?

..... A Warrant Officer known as "AK-47"?

..... A maintenance officer called "Speedy"?

..... The two garretroopers of the 48th?

..... The pilots responsible for blowing over "Big 6's" latrine a few days ago?

..... The Blue Star Engineer requiring only NINE rounds for artillery adjustment?

..... An officer branded "lightning"?

The 48th is the most often is, they have the best pilots. However, the Blue Stars know there's much more to it.

True, we have the best pilots, but we also have a group of assets which allow the stick jockeys to be "number one".

Why do we have clean, dry fuel available at all times?

Why do we have the most aircraft flyable and in the best condition?

Why do the best aviators sleep and eat well?

Why do we have lights, water, vehicles and ammo when we need it?

Why do we have the most liveable community in Dak To?

Again I ask "Why is the 48th best"? The answer is simple, we have the Best Men! To make this point clear, check the Blue Star aircraft against anyone's hanger queens. Our aircraft have never looked better.

Major Frank J. Gundaker

\* \* \*

DOCTOR (cont from pg 1, col 1)

unknown enemy positions. The OIC of the Pathfinders ascertained that the pilot and dazed medic were medically fit to crawl up to the top of the mountain, some four hundred meters away, with the help of his men. They were lifted by a hoist from a CH-46 hovering above and flown to the 48th Aviation Company aid station for medical attention by the Company Aviation Medical Officer, Captain Milton J. Sands. Captain Sands, through talking with the injured medic, learned that one of the remaining crew members had a suspected broken back and was to be airlifted out of the crash site. Fearing that if the injured man did have a broken back, an attempted airlift by sling would greatly endanger his life, causing paralysis and even death; Captain Sands volunteered to go out to the crash site and administer immediate medical attention and determine the best methods of evacuating the seriously injured personnel. With complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Sands was eased down through 60 foot trees atop the mountain by

(cont next col.)

Did You know we had two brothers in the company who are identical twins? It's true, they are Louis and Juan Barrera of the Security Platoon.

The twins hail from Benovides, Texas. They joined the Army on 2 Aug 66 under the "buddy system", and have been together ever since. Back at the ranch (Barrera) they pull the same shift on warm gate nights, and rest on other days. Louis and Juan pull the same shift, enjoy their off duty time together.

\* \* \*

DOCTOR (cont)

hoist from a helicopter. After being dropped to the ground he found himself alone and had to make his way down the incline to the crash site 400 meters away. Doctor Sands made a diagnosis of the injured man and found that the crew chief had to be evacuated immediately because he had a skull fracture and brain damage. He was also having trouble breathing and needed a tracheotomy. The mountain was so steep the helicopter could not hover directly over the crash site. The Pathfinders had blown a small opening in the dense jungle, enough to drop a sling into the area and hover a short distance from the open spot. To save this man's life Captain Sands made the decision to have the helicopter snatch the injured man out of the hole and fly him to the combat rear trains aid station where a tracheotomy could be performed and then be evacuated to Qui Nhon for neuro surgery. Since the gunner was already deceased they airlifted him the same way, but the co-pilot was coughing blood from internal injuries, had several fractured ribs, and shrapnel in his right knee. It was too dangerous to evacuate him the same way as the crew chief and gunner. Doctor Sands and the Pathfinders made a litter out of two ponchos and physically had to crawl 400 meters up the enemy infested incline to the top of the mountain carrying the injured co-pilot. He was placed on a helicopter and safely evacuated. Captain Sands, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability, is

(cont pg 5, col. 2)

Captain James L. Hurlford  
 Captain Johnny K. Gower  
 Captain Louis E. Cox Jr.  
 Captain Walter L. Burch  
 Captain Robert D. Bellus III

-- We see your names on the fingers list.

Congratulations to Captain Robert C. Inglis. Captain Inglis has his Captains bars pinned on by Lt. Col. Fern, commanding officer, 10th Aviation Battalion, before a formation of officers on 16 June 1966.

We are very happy to see five new Sergeants first class (E-7) in the company. They are:

SFC Lawrence E. Hoatt, our Intelligence Sgt.  
 SFC Gilbert McCollough, our Operations Sgt.  
 SFC Alvin C. Fletcher, 1st Airlift Platoon Sgt.  
 SFC William M. Jackson, 390th TC Detachment Maintenance Sgt.  
 SFC Job M. Christopher, Service Platoon Sgt.

Congratulations on your well deserved promotions.

#### LIGHT NEW BLUE STARS

The 48th recently welcomed eight helicopter pilots transferred from the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile). This transfer accomplishes two objectives, it offsets rotation dates for both the 48th and the First Cav Div as the two units arrived in country on separate dates. These experienced pilots bring to the 48th backgrounds from such diverse tactics as armed helicopter reconnaissance, aerial rocket artillery and helicopter troop employment. The pilots joining the 48th are: Capt. Johnny K. Gower, Capt. Lloyd A. Schmitt, CWO Perry L. Jackson, CWO Kenneth C. Faber, CWO George A. Weckerle, WO John W. Hart, WO Joe L. Knoden, and WO Gerald A. Towler.

These eight aviators bring to the 48th an accumulation of 3,346 hours

(Cont. pg 5, col. 2)

Recently and unexpectedly, two helicopter crews of the 48th Aviation Company (Blue Star) had their usual role of supporting the Infantry reversed, and in a manner they shall never forget.

The crews on a cross country flight in two UH-1 helicopters were within 20 minutes of their destination when they encountered low hanging clouds and heavy fog hugging the ridge line to their left. As darkness approached and after repeated attempts to get over the ridge they decided they had better return to the refueling area they had just departed some 40 miles to the west. As they headed their Hueys westward they discovered the weather in the through which they had just flown deteriorating. Large grey thunder clouds lumbered over the hills and ground fog was steadily creeping into the valleys. The clouds were bringing on darkness earlier than usual. The two helicopter crews were suddenly finding themselves entrapped by one of the most severe hazards to Vietnam flying, the summer monsoons.

Both crews had their automatic direction finder tuned to their new destination and their needles indicated SW to the station, when suddenly the course indicators spun 360 degrees and fell limp pointing to the floor. A quick glance at their navigation charts indicated the station they were tracking goes off the air daily at 1800 hours. Still no reason to be excited, the mission commander, Captain James F. Thurmond tuned his UHF radio to contact radar guidance. Within seconds radar contact was established and both crews took up heading of 200 degrees, which would have taken them directly to the station if it had not been for a huge thunderstorm dead ahead. As Captain Thurmond neared the edge of the storm he encountered blinding rain and zero visibility. He turned his navigation lights on bright and radioed to his armed helicopter escort, piloted by Captain James F. Price, to close up and follow him in a left 180 degree turn. Both aircraft banked and after approximately two minutes, which seemed more like two hours, and a little tossing about by the

(Cont. pg 5, col. 1)

FORTUNES (Cont)

enlarging storm, the aircraft again reached clear air. The quiet was broken when the Air Force radar controller announced, "Blue Star 616 (48th Aircraft) this is Pyramid Control, be advised we are unable to continue radar service due to intense thunder storm activity between your target and this station". Odds are heavily against two navigation aids becoming unreliable at once, but in enemy territory even once is too often. As the sun set, the two helicopters were surrounded by clouds stretching from the jungle floor to heights unknown. The chopper pilots were unusually quiet and busy with their maps. They pinpointed their location over National Highway #14, but to attempt flying under these low clouds and with poor visibility of night, would be asking for trouble. Their map indicated nothing within 30 miles except villages of unknown allegiance and the jungle.

It was lighty quiet for what seemed an endless period of time as the birds circled the skies in now desperate hope of finding some way out. Suddenly the silence was broken by Captain James McDowell, Aircraft Commander of the armed chopper, when he sighted two lights approximately 2 kilometers to his left. He radioed Blue Star 616 that he sighted what might be a U.S. Special Forces Camp. Captains Mac and Jim Price decided to make a low pass over the lights. With the two door gunners, SP/5 Gerald A. Kohl and PFC Bobby R. Hamby alerted and the aircraft weapons in the armed position, the pilots brought their Huey over into a shallow dive and came in clipping over the tree tops at 100 knots. Five hundred meters out Captain Price let out a hardy yell, "those guys down there are Americans, we've got it made". They pulled up and radioed to Captain Jim Thurmond and his pilot captain Jack Horne to standby while they landed to check out the situation. When they approached the area the Infantry troops lighted their gasoline filled cans forming a huge flaming E, a mighty friendly sign to these weary but now overjoyed pilots. 1/Lt Ronald P. Cuerno met the crew as they stepped from their aircraft, and he was immediately overwhelmed by these happy aviators. The circling aircraft contacted Pyramid Control, who relayed an ECM (Remain Over Night) message to Blue Star Control. Captain Jack Horne yelled out as he stepped from his Huey, "I never thought

(Cont next col)

DOCTOR (Cont)

credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men and possible annihilation by the Viet Cong that were known to be in the area.

\* \* \*

NEW BLUE STARS (Cont)

Vietnam flying time and more than 12,000 hours total flying experience.

\* \* \*

FORTUNES (Cont)

those white stars on your vehicles could look so good. Boy, is it great seeing you guys". The Infantry troops turned out to be Task Force Harris from 2/5th Cav of the 1st Air Cav Division, commanded by Major Arthur M. Harris. Just twelve days earlier TF Harris had started building a U-130 landing strip out of the wilderness which had so plainly showed up as jungle on the aviators' maps.

The Infantry hosts supplied their guests with a tent, and though it rained all night and the mud was a foot deep, no one ever knew two happier helicopter crews.

\* \* \*

GETTING SHORT .....

During the next month or so, the 48th will lose some of its strength when a few of its enlisted men become civilians.

The 286th Medical Detachment will lose the services of SP/6 Gustar Damphie and SP/4 Ronald A. Relaford. SP/6 Damphie will join his family in Detroit on 13 July and SP/4 Relaford will be in Philly on 25 July.

A couple of helicopter crews will have to be re-manned when SP/5 Alvin T. Fukunaga, a crew chief from Hawaii, and James P. Smith III,

(Cont pg 9, col 2)

## BLUE STAR DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

14 June...

48th furnishes 2 UH-1Ds and three armed UH-1Bs in support of the 10th Aviation Battalion on a combat assault lifting an ARVN force.

General Beneff, 1st Aviation Brigade Commanding General and Colonel Marr, 17th Aviation Group Commanding Officer had dinner with the Blue Stars.

15 June...

0840 hours seven Blue Star UH-1Ds lifted the 1/327th platoon sized Tiger Force on a combat assault. Four Joker aircraft provided escort and pre-struck the LZ as soon as the Air Force completed their strike.

0930 hours the 48th provided seven UH-1Ds to 10th Aviation Battalion for a company sized combat assault.

1045 hours the 48th Blue Stars made an administrative lift of 144 troops.

1300 hours the Blue Stars and Jokers made a recon with 101st LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol).

1800 hours the 48th inserted the LRRP using 3 UH-1Ds and 3 UH-1Bs (Story on page 7).

16 June...

0800 hours five UH-1Ds and two UH-1Bs moved the 1/327th Infantry Tactical CP.

1050 hours two UH-1Ds supported the 129th Aviation Company in extracting two Special Forces patrols in contact with the enemy (Story on page 7).

1530 hours the 48th Blue Stars picked up the 101st LRRP.

17 June...

0712 hours two Joker gunships sent on fire mission for 1/327th Infantry (Story on Page 7).

0830 hours two Jokers dispatched to escort dust off aircraft (Medical Evacuation).

1255 hours the 48th put in one ARVN company and extracted another.

1600 hours the 48th conducted a two company administrative lift.

\* \* \*

## SINGING PILOTS

Congratulations to Captain Donald Kelsey and Captain Robert Delius who placed second and third in the 1st Aviation Brigade song contest conducted in Saigon last week. The lyrics and music are originals by Blue Star members. "A Chopper Pilots Day" came in second and "I'm a Red Hot Pilot" wound up third. Look for the third place winner in next week's.

### "A CHOPPER PILOTS DAY"

#### Verse 1

In the early morning hours  
Before the sun is bright  
You can hear the turbines turning  
As the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over  
The pilots on their way  
To face the fear and danger  
Of a chopper pilots day.

#### Chorus

A chopper pilots day, my boys  
A chopper pilots day  
We face the fear and danger  
Of a chopper pilots day.

#### Verse 2

The VC will be hiding  
For they know so very well  
Should a gunship pilot spot them  
He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air  
The landing zone is near  
The flight turns on its final leg  
No place for cowards here.

#### Chorus - - - - -

#### Verse 3

Machine guns chatter and rockets flash  
An awesome sound and sight  
But a welcomed one for us it is  
For it causes Charlie's fright.

(Cont pg 8, col 2)

By the way, the next time we have an alert, would one of you first platooners make sure your leader gets his boots on the right feet!

6

15 June -

As dusk slowly turned into night and the sun disappeared behind the mountains the stealthy LRRPs and the equally stealthy Blue Stars winged North on another recon mission into no-man's-land. The last minute coordination between aircrews and LRRPs had been accomplished and all that remained was the swift run to the drop off point, a remote jungle clearing. The Blue Stars with their Joker escorts peeled off one by one from formation and the lonely final run to the landing zone commenced. All senses were at high key for the moment of truth was at hand as the Blue Stars swooped down into the vulnerable area to discharge their precious cargo. As the skids brushed the ground the LRRPs dashed for cover and the angry whines of the Jokers could be heard as they flashed by providing that most important fire cover should Charlie be there.

The LRRPs faded into the jungle

(Cont pg 9, col 1)

#### SPECIAL FORCES AIDED

16 June -

This morning two of our slicks were called on to help the 129th Airmobile (our sister company) rescue two 40 man CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Guard) patrols and their Special Forces advisors who were surrounded by the enemy. This ASAP mission was received by Blue Star Operations at 1050 hours. At 1100 hours the crews of 778 and 779 were in the air and linked up with the 129th. The friendly patrol was heavily engaged and pinned down by Charlie, who was within 45 meters. The aircraft orbited overhead until a one ship LZ was hacked out of the bamboo. The Hueys then soared in one at a time and successfully extracted the patrol while under heavy enemy fire. On their return flight to the staging area, with the patrol safely in their ships, they received an emergency request to extract another CIDG patrol which was also pinned down. In routine fashion the crews dropped off their passengers and reported to the new location. They

(Cont pg 9, col 1)

17 June -

As dawn approached the foggy Dak To Valley, Blue Star Operations received an urgent call for two gunships to help out a company of the 101st Airborne Brigade.

Within minutes Jokers 98 and 93 were airborne in answer to the distress message. Captain Morris R. Steenson, the Joker flight leader, established contact with the Infantry company and quick coordination identified the area where fire was requested.

The Jokers started their work in earnest as the ground commander adjusted fire from 2.75 rocket and 40mm grenade bursts. Pass after pass was made. Jokers until they had expended all their rockets and grenades. They continued their support until the ground commander called "Well done, we can move in on them now".

As the Infantry moved into the area which the enemy had occupied, blood trails were found and the Jokers were accredited with an estimated 5 VC KBA (Killed by Aircraft). Returning home for breakfast, the Jokers prepared for another days work.

Captain Morris R. Steenson

\* \* \*

#### BLUE STARS & JOKERS TEAM UP AGAIN

18 June - -

"Just another chopper pilot's day", is becoming quite a saying with the pilots of the 48th, but many are starting to wonder if this statement isn't becoming an every day occurrence.

Once again the Blue Stars were called upon to extract troops out of the heavily wooded mountains northeast of Dak To. For the past three weeks this area has been known to be a well fortified enemy position heavily entrenched with bunkers and spider holes.

A flight of four, led by Captain Radford, was assigned to lift a company, 1st of the 327th Airborne Infantry plus the TAC CP to a new location south of their present Command Post. - Aircrafts

(Cont pg 9, col 1)

-----This one happened last week but we thought you'd like to read it, though admittedly a little late-----

Early on the morning of June 7, three Jokers, the 48th Aviation Company gunships, were returning from an escort mission when they heard an urgent radio call from "B" Battery of the 320th Artillery Battalion, requesting an immediate air strike at their location. Captain Donald R. Kelsey, flight leader of the Joker flight, decided they had sufficient fuel to strike and still return to base camp. The Jokers reversed their flight path and proceeded to the Artillery position. Captain Kelsey coordinated with the ground commander, who marked his position with red smoke. The Jokers were astounded to find the enemy dug in only 25 meters from the friendly troops. The enemy had moved in during the night, dug in, and had the Artillery Battery pinned down with sniper and automatic weapons fire.

The Jokers each made six gun runs, strafing the enemy with machine gun, 2.75 inch rockets and 40mm grenade fire. At first, they were hesitant in firing so close to the friendly position, but after repeated requests from the ground commander, they brought their fire in close. At one time the radio operator shouted, "You got them", as a rocket knocked out an automatic weapon. On their sixth pass the Battery commander called a "Cease fire" and his troops counter attacked the enemy positions.

When the Jokers returned to base camp, Intelligence reported 16 Communists killed with the Jokers receiving credit for 37 KBA. The Jokers received a hearty "thank you" from the Battery commander. The Artillery unit had been under attack since early dawn, and at one time the VC had taken over one 105mm Howitzer. Without the Jokers help the Artillery unit could easily have been overrun.

\* \* \*

## SINGING PILOTS (Cont)

Our choppers settle on no-man's-land  
And now our troops depart  
Charging into battle  
To win, in each man's heart.

Chorus ---- - - -

Verse 4

An enemy on the ground  
Could cost a pilot's life  
And leave a tearful mother  
Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees  
There comes a blinding flash  
There on our right a ship is hit  
We watch the awful crash.

Chorus - - - - -

Verse 5

A gunship comes onto the scene  
To cover the crew's escape  
A slick ship lands to pick them up  
We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise  
Into the morning sky  
A lucky crew is on that ship  
It was not their day to die.

Chorus - - - - -

Verse 6

All crews are now accounted for  
We hear our leader say  
We breathe a sigh, "We made it"  
Through a chopper pilots day.

Written by

Captain Jack Horne  
CWO Bill Moore  
Phan Rang, Vietnam

\* \* \*



## LRRPs (cont)

shadows and the Blue Stars hastened their departure into the protective night. At drop time + 15, the LRRP team leaders radioed their "All Clear" to us, signalling the Blue Stars to return to home base where they remain on standby pending a call from the LRRPs that they're in trouble, at which time the Blue Stars return to bail them out.

---"Another Chopper Pilots Day"---

Captain James T. Radford

\* \* \*

## SPECIAL FORCES (Cont)

extracted the second patrol with the same professional ability they had exhibited in their earlier rescue.

SKILL, NOT LUCK! Well done - WO Moore, WO Stitzle, SP/4 Baca and SP/4 J. Smith of 778 and WO Mason, WO Towler, PFC Manton and SP/4 C. Brown of 779.

WO Towler's comment after the rescue was, "I'm too short for this kind of mission".

WO Fletcher S. Stitzle

\* \* \*

## BLUE STARS & JOKERS (Cont)

774, piloted by Captain Radford and WO Klinger, 889, flown by WO Towler and WO Mason, 776, flown by CWO Harrell and CWO Paulson, and 773, flown by Captain Burch and Lt. Stroup began extracting troops from PZ Suzanne located midway up the mountain.

The Pickup Zone was a typical carved out opening that the Blue Stars have become so accustomed to. A small opening cleared by hand just large enough for one helicopter to set down into like a well fitted part of a jigsaw puzzle.

The first lift was uneventful except for the normal uneasiness and

## BLUE STARS & JOKERS (cont)

sweaty palms from trying to put a helicopter in a hole the size of the main rotor blade. On the second lift, as WO Towler and WO Mason were on snort final, automatic weapons fire suddenly opened up from a small ridge line to the right of the pickup point. As the Infantry dove for cover, WO Towler and WO Mason immediately executed a maneuver that any snort pilot would have done. A hard right turn, tucked the collective under their arms, and parted the grass halfway down the side of the mountain. Joker elements led by Captain Jones were immediately called in to lay down suppressive fire. After hitting the line with rockets and machine gun 889 once again attempted a landing. This time no fire was received and the troops were safely lifted out. Either Charlie had been eliminated or he was too busy keeping his head down.

Blue Stars and Jokers combine into a mighty tough team that's IMPOSSIBLE to stop.

WO Jerry Towler

\* \* \*

## GETTING SHORT (Cont)

a gunner from Daytona Beach, Florida, wave good bye to the 48th. Alvin T.'s LTS is 5 July and Smitty's is on the 11th of the month.

On 30 July, the 48th will lose SP/4 Ronald L. Geier and SP/4 Kenneth F. Lawrey. Ron Geier will leave Operations a man short when he departs for Tacoma, Wash. Ken Lawrey is one of our armament men and he'll be headed for Detroit.

PFC Adolph W. Hartung IV, of the motor pool, will be back home in California on the 23rd of July.

I know you guys hate to leave all this heat but that's the breaks of the game. Good luck to all of you, we'll miss you.

\* \* \*

(Cont next col)

# UNIT HISTORY

## 48<sup>TH</sup> ORL

ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY  
(UH-1) (A)



-B/-

